METRO / A23

Pilot mauled to death by seven men near The Fort bar in Taguig

BUSINESS / B1

BSP slashes key rates by 25 basis points

WORLD / A26

South Korea elects new president

LIFESTYLE / C1

Tips and tricks to go from corporate wear to cocktail chic

Cebu inmates' 'Thriller' in Time most-watched list

GALING NYO MGA KAKOSA!

THE 1,500 CEBU prison inmates who danced their way to global fame when their music video "Thriller" popped up on YouTube have conquered the print medium as well.

CEBU/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Friday, December 21, 2007 ★★ 17 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 13 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Putin is Time's 'Man of the Year'

NEW YORK—Russian President Vladimir Putin was named Time magazine's "Person of the Year" on Wednesday for restoring Russia from chaos to "the table of world power" though at a cost to democratic principles.

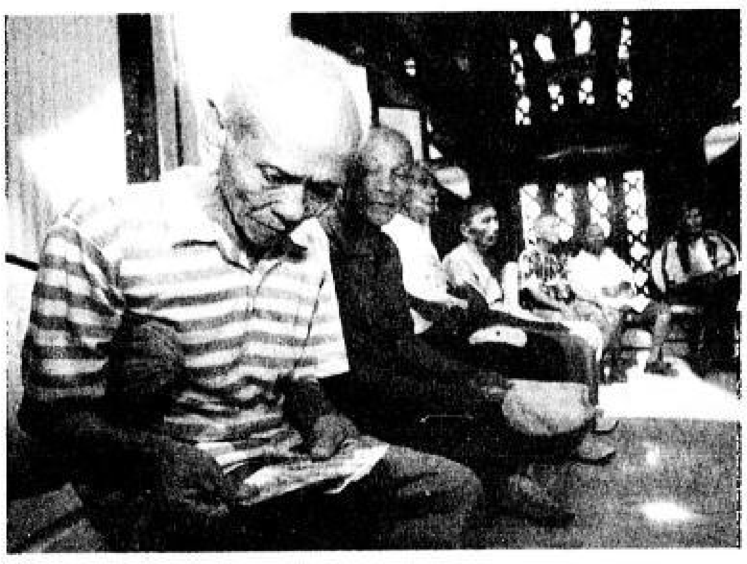
The magazine recognized Putin's "extraordinary feat of leadership in taking a country that was in chaos and bringing it stability," said Richard Stengel, Time's managing editor.

Putin, a former KGB official picked

PUTIN/ A10

MEET AND GREET AND GIFT. President Arroyo invites the 64 inmates she pardoned for health and age reasons to merienda at the Palace on Thursday. Count 'em (at right) Leon Soncados can't seem to believe he has crisp cash in hand, six big ones, distributed to each of the ex-inmates. He inspects each bill carefully after Ms Arroyo left the Heroes Hall in the Palace on Thursday.

LYN RILLON



Oops! Palace clarifies long holiday break

By Michael Lim Ubac

SO SORRY.

There will be no additional pay for employees in the private sector reporting for work on Dec. 22 (Saturday) and 23 (Sunday), as well as on Dec. 29 (Saturday).

"There's no instruction from higher-ups to issue a presidential proclamation to de-

OOPS!/ A13

53 Oakwood rebels freed

GMA pardon doesn't cover Trillanes, 35 others

By Nikko Dizon

THE ARMED FORCES CHIEF of staff yesterday said 53 officers who had pleaded guilty to a lesser offense for joining the 2003 Oakwood mutiny will be celebrating Christmas as free men after President Macapagal-Arroyo granted them executive clemency. *(Full list on Page A10.)*

Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said it was possible some of the men would also be reinstated.

A 54th mutineer, Army 1st Lt. Patricio Bumidang, will remain in custody after turning state witness in the court-martial trial of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, a former Navy lieutenant, and other core leaders of the mutiny.

"Effective today, they are released as civilians," Esperon told reporters after a two-hour closed-door "ceremonial release" at Camp Aguinaldo.

Ms Arroyo granted executive clemency to the 53 officers who pleaded guilty and were subsequently convicted in April of violation of the Articles of War—conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline.

A general court-martial sentenced the officers to seven years in prison, but this was reduced by three years due to mitigating circumstances, and dismissal from the service.

53 OAKWOOD/ A10

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS. Still in a forgiving mode, President Arroyo commutes the 4-year sentences on the leaders of the junior rebel officers like Army Capt. Gerardo Gambala (smiling at right) and Lt. Lawrence San Juan (also smiling at extreme right) with the possibility of reinstatement.

REM ZAMORA

Big business on Sumilao: Rule of law not emotion

By Ronnel W. Domingo and Beverly T. Natividad

A BIG BUSINESS GROUP YESTERDAY warned that the Malacañang ruling on the disputed 144-hectare property in Sumilao, Bukidnon, would discourage future investments in the rural areas.

According to Jesus Arranza, president of the Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI), which counts the San Miguel group of companies among its members, the ruling "sends the wrong signal" to would-be investors. "The rule of law should prevail, not emotions," he said.

Arranza said the ruling had threatened the plans of San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI), the current owner of the Sumilao property, to lay out P2.4 bil-

BIG BUSINESS/ A21

Andaya: GMA P30-B pork imaginary

By Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

BUDGET SECRETARY ROLANDO ANdaya Jr. yesterday dismissed as fiction opposition claims that President Macapagal-Arroyo had a P30-billion "pork barrel" at her disposal and said her discretionary fund amounted to only P800 million.

"That's imaginary," Andaya said, but added that lawmakers should be held responsible if that amount existed in the proposed General Appropriations Act (GAA).

"They are the ones who (padded) the budget. The increases in Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) came from cuts in the debt service," he said.

But the budget secretary could not comment on the President's Social Fund, which gets its budget from the revenues of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

"That's off-budget," Andaya said, using the term for government revenues that don't need congressional approval.

The PDAF is the pork barrel of senators and members of the House. A senator is allocated P200 million annually and a House member, P70 million. Pork funds the pet projects of legislators and is a known source of kickbacks.

ANDAYA/ A10

Have a merry Christmas and green New Year

By TJ Burgonio

HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY CHRISTmas and a green New Year.

With a little imagination, you can devise a number of safe, eco-friendly alternatives to firecrackers to welcome the New Year, the environmental watchdog EcoWaste Coalition said yesterday.

The coalition, along with Miss Earth

HAVE A MERRY/ A10

Adboard censures Star for making false claims

By Volt Contreras

THE ADVERTISING BOARD OF the Philippines (Adboard) has disapproved a recent print ad run by the Philippine Star for making "unsubstantiated" claims on its advertising reach and for containing images "disparaging" to its major competitors.

The ad industry's self-regulating body issued a cease-and-desist order (CDO), effective immediately, stopping further publication of the Star ad for violation of the Adboard Code of Ethics.

The CDO was in response to a

ADBOARD/ A12

Hot Lamborghini, Ferrari, Porsches seized in Makati

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Tonette Orejas

A PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE YESterday seized 81 "hot" luxury cars, a number of which allegedly belonged to San Juan Mayor Jose Victor "JV" Ejercito, from a repair shop in Makati City.

Mostly smuggled allegedly through a port in Cebu City, the vehicles were valued at more than P200 million.

Antonio Villar Jr., head of the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group (PASG), said a warrant of seizure and detention was served on Auto Sports 24 Corp. at No. 2320 Chino Roces Ave. (formerly Pasong Tamo), where 84 luxury cars were undergoing repairs.

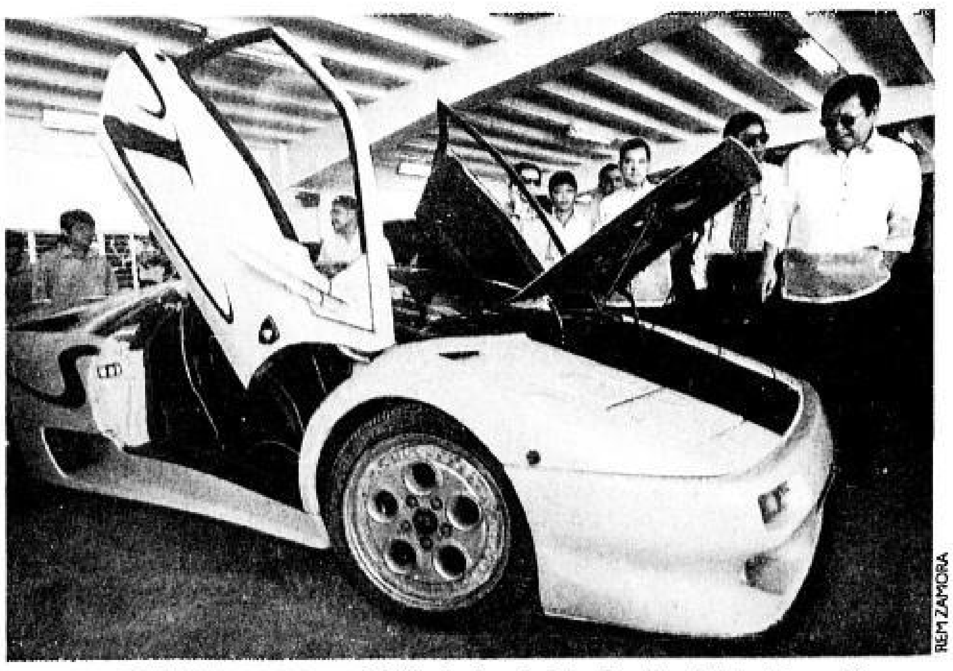
"Out of the 84 vehicles at the shop, 81 were initially found to be lacking the necessary documents proving that they had been imported legally," Villar said.

At least one Lamborghini, a Ferrari, 21 BMWs, 16 Mercedes Benzes, 11 Porsches, four Jaguars and three Volvos were among those subjected to verification yesterday, Villar said.

A source, who requested anonymity because he was not allowed to divulge the details of the operation, said at least seven of the luxury vehicles at the shop were owned by Mayor Ejercito.

The source said Ejercito, a son of de-

HOT/ A21



REM ZAMORA

WHO OWNS THIS BABY? Antonio Villar Jr., head of the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group, and NBI agents inspect a Lamborghini Diablo, one of the luxe cars in a Pasong Tamo repair shop. The cars were found to have been imported to the country illegally.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rains while Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy skies.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Mostly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: SCHATZI QUODALA, PDI RESEARCH/12/20/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

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SIX DIGIT
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(In exact order)

Mid-Day **SUERTRES** Evening
8 8 3 | 4 1 6

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
5 15 18 22 38 46
₱29,480,333.40

Esperon on extension: Up to GMA

But Lacson, Honasan say keeping him won't do AFP any good

By Nikko Dizon

ARMED FORCES CHIEF Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., who is scheduled to retire early next year, yesterday said it was up to President Macapagal-Arroyo to decide whether to extend his term or not.

"The deciding authority on all these things, the extension, is the President. We should leave that to the President," Esperon told reporters following the release of 53 Magdalo junior officers at Camp Aguinaldo.

Talk has been rife that Malacañang would extend Esperon's term which will end on Feb. 9 next year, when he turns 56 years old, the mandatory age retirement for military servicemen.

Esperon admitted talking "more often" to the President lately, but it was only in connection with the AFP anniversary today and some military operations.

Esperon said they did not talk about his term extension.

"On my part, I could only thank the President for giving me the chance to serve as chief of staff. Not everybody could get to serve as chief of staff. If (my term will be) extended, then I would be honored," Esperon said, reiterating his earlier statement when first asked by the media since the rumors on his term extension circulated nearly three weeks ago.

Esperon said he was not the type of person who would lobby for an extension and "assert myself."

He admitted that only twice in his career did he "ask for anything."

This was when he asked to join the strike infantry battalion in Jolo, Sulu, as a young lieutenant and to be assigned in Zamboanga after the 1995 burning of Ipil town.

"Those were the only assignments that I asked for. After that I didn't lobby for my assignments anymore. I take (them) as they come and thank them (appointing authorities) for their trust and confidence so it's really nothing for us to be thinking about," Esperon said.

He said his term extension should not be the issue in focus, pointing out that there are several military operations now where there are casualties.

He was apparently referring to the recent encounters of the military with the Abu Sayyaf bandits and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels in Basilan and the ambush by communist rebels in Palawan that left a total of five soldiers dead.

His cavaliers in the Senate, Senators Panfilo Lacson and Gregorio Honasan, who are both alumni of the Philippine Military Academy, oppose any term extension for Esperon.

Lacson, a former national police chief, said he saw no need to extend Esperon's term beyond February next year, saying it would likely lead to demoralization since this would affect the promotion of those next in line.

"In my view, he does not deserve an extension. But if we talk about blind loyalty to the commander in chief, then maybe he should get an extension," said Lacson.

"I really don't care if his term is extended. The problem is the demoralization this would bring to the soldiers' corps especially since Esperon is involved in the Garci (election cheating) issue that has not been satisfactorily explained until now," he added. *With a report from Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

'Nothing illegal about bonuses'

By Christine O. Avendaño and Norman Bordadora

SAYING THE HOUSE OF REPresentatives has fiscal autonomy, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya yesterday said that the House can grant each congressmen the P200,000 in staff bonuses this Christmas.

Andaya said the House did not violate anything by granting the bonuses to its employees.

"They're fiscally autonomous. The funds for these are strictly from their own," Andaya told reporters in Malacañang.

Because of its own system, the House like the national government can grant bonuses, he explained. He said, recently, the Palace granted up to P10,000 in performance bonuses to all government employees.

Asked how the House will get its funds for the bonuses, the budget secretary said: "Remember that when you are fiscally autonomous, you have the power to realign, you have power of savings, power of recommendation."

"So you can actually readjust your budget to suit the needs of your members but of course within your ceiling," Andaya said.

Meanwhile, Andaya said his department had already released the P7,000 the national government will shell out as performance bonuses to government employees.

"Government employees should get their bonuses by now," he said.

In late October, only members of the majority allegedly received cash gifts of as much as P500,000 each when they went to Malacañang for a breakfast meeting with President Macapagal-Arrroyo.

But this time even members of the House opposition also received the P200,000 in staff bonuses, a member of the militant bloc confirmed yesterday.

WHAT'S INSIDE

RED CARPET for returning RP workers /A5

MORE PINOYS still see happy Christmas /A8

NO MORE oil price hikes this year /A11

100&
CELEBRATING

RAFFLE WINNERS

SAMSUNG LCD

Baluyot, Frederick
Poblacion #2 Pura, Tarlac City

Mangat, Ramonito
Blk 41 Lot 26 Ynares Village Habitat Pinugay
Baras Rizal

MAC BOOK

Cabrera, Julie
191 D. Alvela St. Calauan Laguna

Lapreza, Ferdinand
647 CRM Ave. Goodyear Park Almanza,
City

Manalili, Gener
CutCut Rizal Ext. Angeles City

SONY PSP

Peralta, Jerry
8000 Kabihasnan St. cor Coastal Road, Pque City

Dela Cruz, Rodolfo
4 Castro Apartment Baliti, San Fernando

Agrade, Leon
84 Gabon St, Abucay Bataan

Divivar,Reynaldo
75 B Acacia St. Cembo Makati

Sibulangcao, Levy
55 Rose Alley Gibraltar Baguio City

Espirito, Maricar
193 Sto. Rosario, Karujatan, Valenzuela City

Gonzalez Jr., Dulcesimo
Blk 14, Lot 61, Nicolosa Virata GMA Cavite

Chavez, Rene
Brgy 10, Balayan Batangas

Gullano, Jerry
738 E. Rodriguez St. Malibay Pasay

Dichoso, Jonathan
139 Purok 1 Blk.5, Bayanan, Muntinlupa

Chua, Aileen
Dynasty Bldg.Nat. Highway, Halang, Calamba,
Laguna

De Dios, Mark Leonard
1643 Binkayan Kawit Cavite

Provendido, Escolastica Gina
Blk 17, Lot 13, Regina Vill, 2000 Trece Martirez City
Cavite

Domanais, Noli Brin
Purok 7, Bislaong Cmpd. Multi. Village, Pque

Velasquez, Regtito
B7 L18 PH1 Springville Molino
Bacoor, Cavite

Mangalindan, Jose
458 Narra St. Balon Anito, Mariveles Bataan.

Garcia, Joselito
155 San Nicolas St. Binondo Manila

Bernardo, Neil
112 14th St. New Kalalake, Olongapo City

Encabo, Nelson
B60 L17 Ville Cabuyao Laguna

Dela Pena, Domingo
191 Camia St. P3 Silverio Compound Paranaque

NOKIA 6300

Fernandez, Ian
Daungan St. Malgahan, Meycauyan, Bulacan

Chavez, Raul
Blk 8, L15, Summerwind, I- Salitran, Dasma. Cavite

Bernardo, Errol
1248 Bambang Los Banos, Laguna

Obias, Rose
324 San Juanico St, Ayala Alabang Village

De Guzman, Edgardo
165 Balite, Cabanatuan City

Pagasartonga, Lino
265 Brgy. Lanas, Mangaldan, Pangasinan

Fernandez, Lawrence
47 Mabini St. Binmaley Pangasinan

Centino, Daisy
303 Taloglog, Mangaldan, Pangasinan

Suruiz, Joemarie
B23 L10 Sitio Olandes IV-C Marikina City

Yu, Alejandro
24 C. benitex St. benitez St. Q.C

Castillo, Arlene
BII L19 Gawaran Ext. Molino VII Bacoor Cavite

Guillermo, Ma. Isabela
7 Scarlet Homes Moonwalk Pque

Malicdem, Ariel
423 Agoncillo Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa

Placito, Morito
San Agustin St, San Miguel Iloilo

Malanum, Juliet
475 Arellano St. Poblacion, Mangaldan, Pangasinan

Reyes, Mark Ronald
103 F. Rosales St. Brgy Sta. Ana, Pateros, MM

Salvador, Ma. Nenita
396 Bacayao, Guimba, Nueva Ecija

Bernardo, Leonardo
20 Lopez Jaena St. Pasig City

De Ocera, Bernard
0666 Sitio Suba Matatalaib Tarlac City

Manlansing, Rubelyn
583 San Antonio Cupayo Nueva Ecija

iPod

Buniag, Jerry
Murcia, Concepcion, Tarlac City

Penaredonda, Antonio
Brgy. Cutcutan, Catanauan Batangas

Ylagan, Rolex
200 Salomague Sur Bugallon, Pangasinan

Espinoza, Michael
646 National Road, Balon Anito, Mariveles, Bataan

Ringor, Arnulfo
07-027 Zamora, Cabarroguis, Quirino

Bautista, Victor
100 Buensuceso Homes 2 Merville Paque

Sanchez, Romy Boy
Km 3 Naguilian Rd., Irisan, Baguio City

Cabigas, Georgie
Cacaoiten, Mangatarem, Pangasinan

Apelo, Lenie
134 Brgy Calo, Bay Laguna

Madulid, Bless
30 Mampulog Bitas, Cabanatuan City

Jose, Quiape
10 Casmor PH 1, Mabiga, Mabalacat, Pampangá

Labong, Marilou
Blk 6, lot 12, Phase I, Sapang Biabas, Resettlement,
Mabalacat

Padunan, Esmerlita
Concepcion East, Zaragoza, Nueva Ecija

Jamias, Jaime
1503 Anastacio, Guadalupe Neuvo, Makati City

Osorio , Magda
Blk 9 Lot B Camachile Subdv. GTC

Bunsoy, Victor
230 Dalia St. DFS Balanga City, Bataan

Gutierrez, Ramil
Brgy. Daungan, Pagbilao Quezon

Sebastian, Elma
Phase IA BL2 L23 Cityhomes Molino 4, Bacoor
Cavite

Cortez, Ramon
762 Immaculada St. Springside, Pandan, Angeles City

Adriano, Noel
249 Taal, Pulilan Bulacan

P5000.00 Gift Check

Butil, Ranulfo
0-6 Ma. Clara St. Esgel Park Subd., San Fernando,
Pampanga

Pablo, Marry Jane
Sitio Manga, Candaba, Pampanga

Consunji, Roynaldo
96 B. Vizcarra St. Malibay, Pasay

Maskay, Ruben
705 San Vicente, Baguio City

Santana, Albert
211 Pasig Bliss Condo, Pasig City

Galiza, Alvin
115 Molave St. Ayala Alabang Muntinlupa City

Lim, Reginald
4 Diamond St. South Greenpark, Merville Pque

Vergara, Antonio
Elisa Homes, Molino, Bacoor, Cavite

Capule, Sherwin
495 Sevilla St., Atlag, Malolos City

Paner, Francisco
606 Taysan St., Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City

Ascano, Joel
61 Visayas St. Ayala Alabang

Dy, Olivia
37 Jose Abad Santos, San Juan Metro Manila

Rivera JR. , Alfredo
070 Purok 6, Irisan Baguio City

Sabado, Michell
Sta. Veronica GBA, Nueva Ecija

Carillo, Erwin
Villaros Bagabag, Neuva Viscaya

Gatdula ,Angelito
Sitio Parca, Camayoa, Mariveles, Bataan

Celmar, Michael
230 Gov. Carpio St.San Isidro Norte, Sto. Tomas,
Batangas

Cuevas, Montesa
409 Harvard St.Marisol Subdivision Angeles City

Montano, Leonides
171 N. Cuevas St Calawaan, Pasig City

Oliveros, Jenny
Villamin St. Cavinti, Laguna

Palma Jr., Severino
Blk 12, lot 40, George
Town NTS Subdivision
Mol.4 Bac. Cavite City

Guanzon, Ernie
3044 San Martin St., Cen II, Pinagbuhatan,
Pasig City

Gallato, Leonida
Bulo, Victoria, Tarlac

Centeno, Melgrace
27 San Roque Village, Baguio City

Ilao, Kristofferson
B225 L69 P2 Mabuhay CityHomes Mamatid, Cablay

Leonera, Mariessol
2050 de Guzman Blvd. Mariveles, Bataan

Bredes, Ma. Dolores
Blk 7 Lot 9 Eliza Homes Ph 2, Molino 4, Bacoor City

De Belen, Michael
Lambakin, Jaen, Nueva Ecija

Castillo, Ethel
173 Brgy. San Juan, Alaminos Laguna

Agustin, Eleonor
143 Tibag St., Balon Anilo, Mariveles, Bataan

Sibayan, Dominador
13 A Sitio Nazareth San Isidro, Paranaque City

De Guzman, Arthur
20 London St. Ciudad Grande, Pasig

Costales, Jelo
15 Denver St. Greenville, Pque

Fernandez, Mark
Brgy. Binan, Fernandez Comp., Pagsanjan,
Laguna

Ang, Jose
435 B. EDSA Pasay City

TOTAL
24 hours
Café
Convenience Store
Car Care
Car Wash

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5326, Series of 2007

LA honors 13 Fil-Am docs, nurses

THE LOS ANGELES CITY GOVERNMENT recently honored 13 Filipino-American doctors and nurses for their "exemplary work as health care professionals and role models," the Philippine consulate in LA said yesterday.

In her report to the Department of Foreign Affairs, consul-general Mary Jo Aragon said the awardees were given certificates of commendation during the council's meeting on Dec. 14 by LA council president Eric Garcetti and council member Richard Alarcon.

In his remarks during the awarding ceremonies, Garcetti thanked the Filipino-Americans who looked after the well-being of Los Angeles residents and recalled his sponsorship of bill calling for the creation of a "Filipinotown" in Los Angeles in 2003.

With reference to the Desperate Housewives episode maligning Philippine medical schools, Garcetti said the good record of Filipino-Americans in healthcare will prevail over any misinformed comments about the second largest Asian ethnic group in Los Angeles.

The Filipino-American awardees were doctors Francisco P. Quismorio Jr., Robinson Villaverde Baron, Rolando Mercader, Noli Soza, Arnel Joaquin, Edwinn Sistoza, Mariedel Leviste-Mosqueda, Edgar Banez and Delia Cabansag, as well as nurses Josie Jones, Mila Velasquez, Violeta Unabia and Lydia Roblow-Jimenez.

Aragon also reported that LA council member Bill Rosendahl stated that he has visited the Philippines and recognized the Filipinos as the backbone of the US nursing industry. *Cynthia D. Balana*

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Galunggong	P95-120
Kamatis	P40-70
Pechay	P25-50
Sitaw	P45-60
Talong	P40-65

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SOURCE: DA-Bureau of Agricultural Statistics

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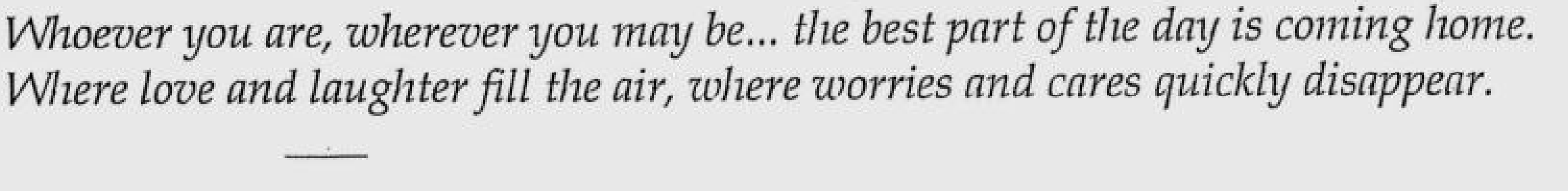

Come home to a

Carrier

No. 1 in air conditioning

Red carpet for returning RP workers

By Tarra Quismundo

BY HANDING OUT *KAKANIN*, CASH AND gift certificates, President Macapagal-Arroyo spread Christmas cheer among returning Filipino migrant workers at the airport yesterday morning.

True to a presidential tradition now 14 years in the running, Ms Arroyo welcomed close to 300 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who flew back to Manila past 10 a.m. yesterday. Each received a handshake, a greeting and *kakanin* (native cake) from the President during a red carpet reception at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1.

Flanked by Labor Secretary Arturo Brion, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) chief Marianito Roque, and airport officials, Ms Arroyo spent close to 30 minutes welcoming each of the OFWs carried back home by Gulf Air Flight GF154.

Five pre-selected migrant workers who booked the flight from different parts of the Middle East received P50,000 from telecommunications giant Globe, $500 worth of Duty Free gift certificates, scholarships from the AMA Education system, gift vouchers from the state-run gaming firm, and a multi-cab from the Development Bank of the Philippines.

"*Sana po ay tuloy-tuloy ninyong tulungan ang mga* OFW *na nagsasakripisyo. Maraming pong naghihirap na* OFWs (We hope you will continue to help OFWs who make sacrifices. There a lot of OFWs who continue to suffer)," said one of the recipients, Elena Abestano, a 48-year-old domestic helper who flew home while her employment woes in Bahrain remained unresolved.

The others who received surprise gifts from the President were Lydia Magtanong, a registrar, Michelle Aquino, an engineering firm employee, Ruben Garcia, a technician and Anabelle Macajeto, a domestic helper.

Roque said the workers were selected after a background check proved they were the most deserving among OFWs who booked the 154 flight. The Owwa chief said the handpicked winners included OFWs who earned low wages in their overseas jobs.

William Pangan, another migrant worker, meanwhile received from Gulf Air, a round-trip ticket to any of the airline's destinations as the flight's 154th passenger out of the total 297.

The President later gathered them for a chat while they snacked on spaghetti and sandwiches at the old terminal's Dignitaries Lounge.

Two-month-old Jacob Jenson Historillo was not on the list of winners but when he arrived in Manila for the first time yesterday, he immediately caught the President's eye.

Sweltering in a thermal onesie (body suit for infants) while in the arms of his mother, the boy also received a Christmas gift from Ms Arroyo who saw him near the terminal's immigration counter area.

The envelope, which the President handed to the boy's mom after a brief exchange, contained $200 worth of gift certificates.

"We were the last to get off the plane. We were told back at the airport in Bahrain that she will welcome us but I was surprised that she gave this to us," said Jeanette Historillo, 30, a former librarian who joined her husband Augyson, an engineer, in Saudi Arabia a year ago.

The Historillos, natives of Marinduque, came home for a holiday visit.

BSP to ease forex controls

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS yesterday announced it would ease foreign exchange rules next month in an attempt to stem the sharp rise of the peso that has hurt exporters and families of overseas Filipino workers.

In a press briefing yesterday, BSP officials said the easing of forex rules will allow people to purchase dollars and other foreign currencies with less restrictions. Such a move is seen to increase demand for foreign currencies, which in turn will weaken the peso.

Starting January, the BSP will increase the allowable foreign currency purchases by residents, for non-trade purposes, from the previous $10,000 per application to $30,000. "Non-trade" purposes include payment for education, medical services, travel, and the like.

Foreign currency

The BSP will also increase the amount of allowable foreign currency purchases per investor per year, from $12 million to $30 million, for purposes of investing abroad.

Thrift banks, rural banks and cooperative banks will also be allowed to deposit to and borrow from banks offshore without restriction on the terms of maturity. Currently, they are allowed to deposit offshore but only on a short-term basis.

Yet another reform is allowing importers to buy foreign currency to pay imports in advance without prior approval by the BSP as long as the amount is $100,000 or less. Currently, advance payment for imports require approval by the BSP regardless of amount.

Pangulong GLORIA
MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

RETURNING HEROES. Overseas Filipino workers home for the holidays are greeted by a welcome committee headed by President Macapagal-Arroyo herself (left photo).

JESS YUSON

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5020 Series of 2007

Solons to block Teves app't for refusing to suspend oil tax

By Gil C. Cabacungan

FOR REJECTING THE SENATE's plea for him to ease the oil price burden on consumers by suspending the oil tax, Sen. Mar Roxas vowed Finance Secretary Margarito Teves would not make it through the Commission on Appointments.

Roxas told reporters that Teves—who has been bypassed by the bicameral commission the last two years—had thumbed down a proposal by some senators to suspend the 12-percent expanded value-added tax (VAT) on oil products for at least six months because that would make it even, more difficult for him to reach his collection targets and easier to lose his job.

"The e-vat on oil is the easiest to collect for any finance secretary which is why he does not want to let it go at the expense of the consumers who would enjoy as much as P4 per liter savings with the suspension. His job is on the line, that is why he was quick to reject the oil vat suspension," Roxas said.

Senate support

He said the suspension of the VAT on oil had broad support in the Senate, including from Senators Rodolfo Biazon, Benigno Aquino III and Francis Escudero. He said he would ask Biazon, who is a member of the Commission on Appointments, to veto Teves' appointment.

"There is P210 billion in back taxes and tax leaks that Secretary Teves has failed and refused to address. Why doesn't he act on them and let consumers have some breathing room by suspending the e-vat? Where is his political will? I understand he has to protect his position but when does Juan de la Cruz come into his decisions?" Roxas said.

He said Teves refused to consider that the P20 billion to P30 billion to be lost from the suspension of the VAT would be made back through consumer spending that would be subject to tax.

Loren's ire

Sen. Loren Legarda had earlier castigated Teves for rejecting her bill that pushed for a tax exemption on the bank savings of senior citizens and at the same time reversed the Bureau of Internal Revenue by lowering the excise tax on Pall Mall cigarettes from P26.06 to P6.74 per pack.

Teves was also criticized by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago for rushing the sale of the profitable Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. purportedly to meet his goal of a balanced budget.

Roxas said the Senate would also look into the implementation of the Lateral Attrition Law to see if anyone had been punished for failing to meet collection targets at the BIR and Bureau of Customs, among other revenue-generating agencies.

Roxas said the Senate was determined Teves would be held responsible for the government's failure to meet revenue targets and not his underlings who could be made the fall guys.

Philcomsat takeover based on bogus letters, says rival group

THE POBLADOR-LOCSIN FACTION IN THE Philippine Holdings Corp. of the Philcomsat group said it would go to the Sandiganbayan today to protest the forcible takeover of the PHC offices the other day by the rival Ilusorio-Africa group.

The group's lawyer, Pitero Reig, said the Ilusorio-Africa group (also called Bildner-Africa group, after leaders Erlinda Ilusorio-Bildner and Victor Africa) had no authority to take over the PHC offices as its election as the "new" government representatives to the PHC board was based on bogus letters of authority from Malacañang.

The Ilusorio-Africa and the Locsin-Poblador groups represent competing shareholder factions fighting for control of three companies with interlocking directorships—PHC, the Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (Philcomsat) and the Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC).

PHC is 80 percent owned by Philcomsat and both firms are in turn owned by the POTC, the shares of which were sequestered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government in 1986 on charges that these were part of the ill-gotten wealth of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. The government owns 35 percent of POTC through and appoints directors to the group.

Two factions

The two factions are currently fighting over which is the legitimate board of cash-rich PHC, which the Locsin-Poblador (for Enrique Locsin and Concepcion Poblador) group has controlled since 2004.

According to Reig, the Ilusorio-Bildner group, using letters signed by Bernardo Abes, the former chair of the Government Service Insurance System, and Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera, voted themselves into the boards of POTC, Philcomsat and PHC last month, with the sequestered shares being voted by Undersecretary Enrique Perez of the Presidential Management Staff, not by the PCGG.

"The Locsin-Poblador group, in contrast, has these critical appointment documents signed by the President [Macapagal-Arroyo] herself and addressed to PCGG, which has the authority to vote the shares in sequestered corporations," said Reig in a statement.

"We are ready to show these papers in any public forum. We challenge the crony Ilusorio-Africa group to do the same," he said.

The Ilusorio-Africa group "already controls POTC and Philcomsat but also wants to control cash-rich PHC, but all they have is a letter signed by Abes and Devanadera. Can underlings and especially an ex-official overturn a presidential action?" he said.

With a report from Daxim Lucas

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Healthline 637-9999 www.philhealth.gov.ph

PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR
No. 20, s-2007

TO : ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS, MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT : AMENDMENT TO PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR NO. 34 s.2006 PHILHEALTH NEWBORN CARE PACKAGE (NCP)

Pursuant to approved PhilHealth Board Resolution No. 1060 series of 2007 amending PhilHealth Board Resolution No. 925 s.2006 the following are guidelines on the implementation of NCP:

GENERAL RULES

1. The package shall cover all eligible newborn-dependents delivered in all accredited health facilities including non-hospital maternity health care providers.
2. Services covered shall include administration of BCG vaccine and resuscitation of the newborn. The amount of the package however shall remain at P1,000.
3. It is reiterated that the health care facility should be able to provide all the required services covered by the package. In case the facility was not able to provide the complete services, claims from the said facility shall not be compensated. This however, shall not prohibit payment to members within the amount of the package item enumerated in Circular No. 34 s.2006 provided that Official Receipt/s are attached to the claim application.
4. To qualify as service providers for this package, currently accredited facilities and those applying for initial, renewal and re-accreditation are required to submit a photocopy of Newborn Screening Facility (NSF) certificate issued by the Department of Health (DOH) or Newborn Screening Reference Center (NSRC) to the Accreditation Department or Accreditation Section of PhilHealth Regional Offices (PROs) on or before December 31, 2007. All claims of PhilHealth accredited facilities for NCP with admission beginning January 1, 2008 that are not certified by DOH or NSRC as NSF shall not be reimbursed.
5. Newborn Screening (NBS) is ideally performed after twenty-four hours of life but not later than three (3) days from complete delivery of the newborn. As such, claims for NCP within the said period shall be compensated. However, for newborns placed in intensive care to ensure survival, premature and sick newborns, they may be exempted from the three-day requirement but should be tested within seven (7) days of age. Official Receipt/s for NBS dated within the same period (even after discharge of patient/newborn) shall be covered by the package.

CLAIMS FILING

1. The facility should indicate the **filter collection card number** of the NBS specimen collection form in the Part IV (C) item no. 3 of the said claim form. The said claim form shall be returned to the facility in case the facility is not able to indicate the said number.

To illustrate:

C. Others

1. Eye prophylaxis, umbilical cord care, Vitamin K, thermal care, administration of BCG vaccine & resuscitation of the newborn
2. 1st dose of Hepatitis B immunization
3. Newborn Screening Test *(filter collection card number)*

2. All services covered by the package should be enumerated in the Part IV (C) of the said claim form as shown above.
3. To facilitate speedy processing of claims it is reiterated that Claim Forms 1 and 2 shall be submitted together with maternal application within the prescribed period.
4. All claim applications for NCP shall be coded using RVS code 99432

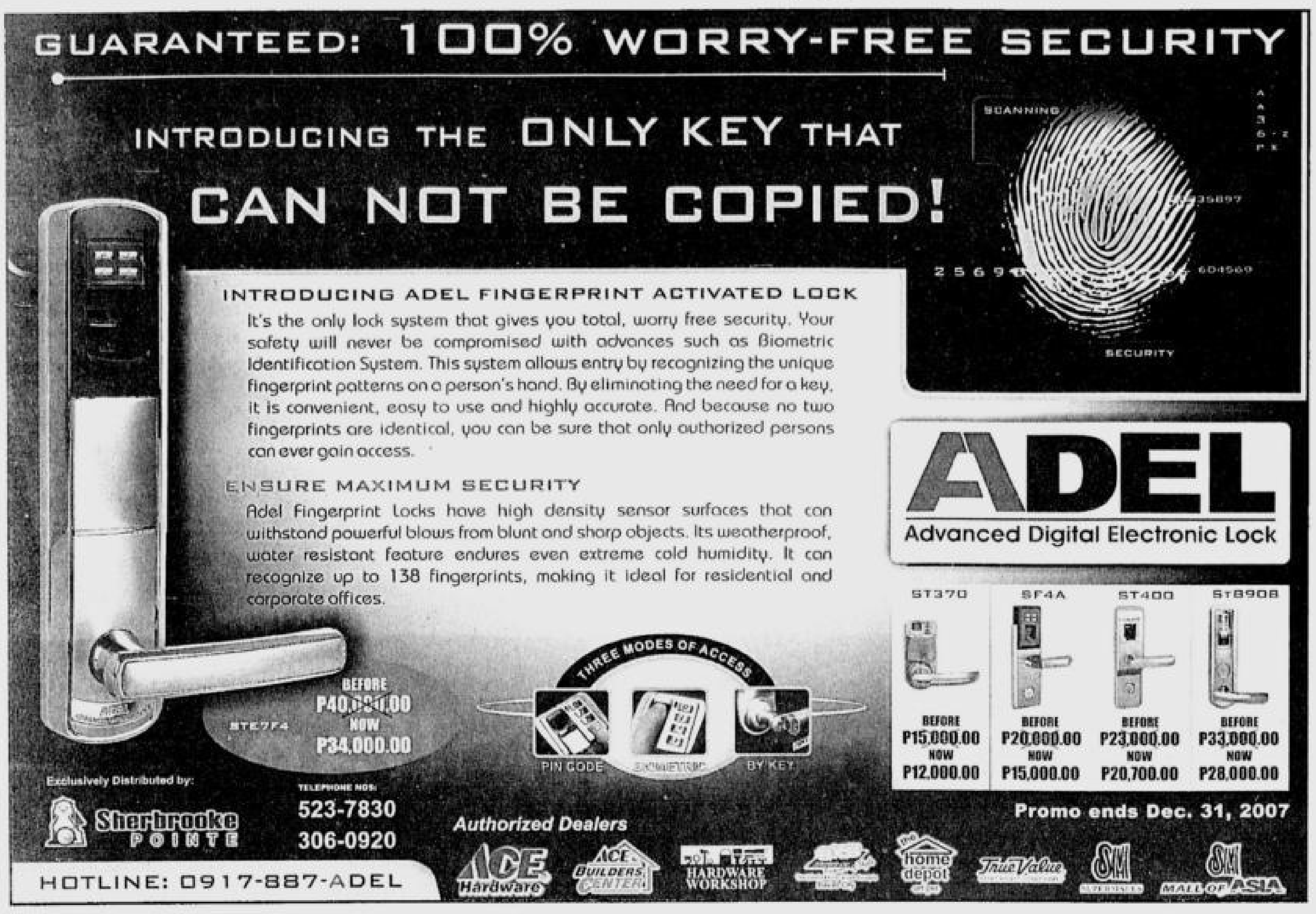
CODE	DESCRIPTIVE TERM	RVU
99432	Normal Newborn Care	Package

5. PhilHealth rules on ICD-10 shall also apply for this package.
6. Requirements for NCP claim applications shall include:
   - 6.1 duly accomplished Forms 1 and 2
   - 6.2 certificate of live birth
   - 6.3 clear copy of Member Data Record
   - 6.4 proof of premium payment

This Circular shall take effect for all claims with admission dates starting January 1, 2008. All other benefit availment rules inconsistent with these rules are hereby repealed.

(Sgd.) LORNA O. FAJARDO
Acting President and CEO

Date signed: December 12, 2007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ABS-CBN wins TRO vs Nielsen

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson and Jeannette I. Andrade

TELEVISION GIANT ABS-CBN BROADCASTing Corp. has secured a 20-day temporary restraining order (TRO) yesterday from a Quezon City trial court preventing AGB Nielsen Media Research (Philippines) Inc. from gathering and releasing data on TV ratings from reported corrupted home panels.

In a three-page order, Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 80 judge Charito B. Gonzales directed the media research firm to "cease and desist" from pursuing its nationwide television audience measurement (TAM) data gathering activities and distributing the results to its clients.

ABS-CBN filed last Friday a P63 million civil case against AGB Nielsen for damages and injunction with an application for a TRO after it complained about an operation to bribe metered homes in Bacolod City so they would watch GMA shows, thus heating up the network war.

AGB Nielsen collects data that it processes from a sample of households called "panel homes" that mirror the TV population's viewing habits. AGB Nielsen then sells the data to the media industry.

Common currency

TAM data serves as a common currency by which networks sell, and advertisers buy airtime for advertising spots, thus the need for it to be true and accurate, ABS-CBN said in its damage suit.

The suit stemmed from reports allegedly received by ABS-CBN that "panel homes" or representative samples of household TV viewers surveyed for the TAM data had been identified by certain individuals and were bribed to watch GMA shows.

The court noted that during a hearing, AGB Nielsen did not belie ABS-CBN's allegation that there was "an infiltration of panel homes which could have compromised the integrity of the ratings data."

"Under the service contract between the parties, the defendant (AGB Nielsen) was under obligation to ensure the confidentiality of the panel homes and accuracy and reliability of the TAM data," Gonzales wrote in her court order.

ABS-CBN further alleged that AGB Nielsen managing director Maya Reporma "admitted knowing about the infiltration and of the persons responsible therefore but instead of taking positive action to address the problem, no further action was taken."

Gonzales also said that Reforma even admitted that there was tampering of AGB Nielsen's panel homes which was the subject of an investigation.

"While in her affidavit, she alleged that the tampering was confined to a certain locality and that (TAM data) was wholly unaffected, the fact remains that the integrity of the TAM data had been compromised. The apprehensions of the plaintiff (ABS-CBN) therefore, are not without justifiable reasons," Gonzales said.

Gonzales also said that AGB Nielsen also failed to dispute that the delivery of tainted data would cause ABS-CBN grave and irreparable injury.

Gonzales added that the court is convinced that ABS-CBN will suffer "irreparable damage and injury" unless AGB Nielsen was stopped from continuing its data gathering processes.

GMA Network Inc. vice president for legal affairs division Dick Perez said in a press briefing yesterday that it cannot comment on the TRO issued since it is not a party to the case.

In 2007, ABS-CBN entered into two service contracts with AGB Nielsen, one of which expired last June 30 while the second will expire on Dec. 31.

ABS-CBN recently received reports that AGB Nielsen's panel homes had been identified by certain individuals and that the TV viewers comprising these panel homes were influenced to change their viewing habits in favor of its rival network, the court narrated in its order.

The alleged infiltration of panel homes seriously affected the validity and integrity of the TAM data. Thus ABS-CBN met with Reforma reporting the alleged tampering of the data.

Search is on for 2nd Gawad Haydee Yorac

THE MANILA ELECTRIC COMPANY (MERalco), in cooperation with the University of the Philippines, will once again pay tribute to our country's modern day heroes through the annual Gawad Haydee Yorac for Outstanding Public Service. Now on its second year, the award honors men and women from the private sector, government service and volunteer organizations who exhibit leadership that is grounded on service and on a vision of improving the lives of others.

Last year, the award was given to Antonio P. Meloto of Gawad Kalinga (GK), a renowned anti-poverty and nation-building charismatic movement. Through the GK, Meloto was able to mobilize volunteers, Filipinos and foreigners alike, toward helping alleviate poverty in the country. Just like the late Haydee Yorac, Meloto was a role model for public service.

The award shall be conferred annually on March 4, Yorac's birthday. The winner will receive a trophy by National Artist Napoleon Abueva and a cash gift of P300,000, net of tax.

Deadline of nominations is on Jan. 15, 2008.

US visa fee hiked to $131

By Cynthia D. Balana

STARTING JAN. 1 NEXT YEAR, THE UNITed States will increase the application fee for non-immigrant visa from $100 to $131.

The US embassy in Manila said the increase would enable the US State Department to recover the costs of security and other enhancements to the non-immigrant visa application process. The application fee has increased twice since 9/11, the last time in 2002.

Applicants who paid the $100 fee before Jan. 1 will be processed only if they are scheduled and appear for a visa interview on or before Jan. 31.

On the other hand, if they appear for visa interviews after Jan. 31, 2008 they must pay the difference of $31 before they will be interviewed.

This additional fee must be paid at one of the designated branches of Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) or Citibank, the two banks that are authorized to collect visa fees.

According to the embassy, the department was required by law to recover the cost of processing non-immigrant visas through the collection of the Machine-Readable Visa application fee.

It said that the $100 Machine-Readable Visa fee is lower than the actual cost of processing non-immigrant visas considering the new security related costs, new information technology systems, and inflation.

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DECEMBER SURVEY

More Pinoys still see happy Christmas

By Kate Pedroso
Inquirer Research

SLIGHTLY MORE THAN THREE of every five adult Filipinos (64 percent) expect this Christmas to be a happy one, while nearly a third (27 percent) say it would neither be happy nor sad, according to the latest survey by the Social Weather Stations.

The December 2007 Social Weather Survey also found that 8 percent expect this Christmas to be sad.

"The proportion expecting a happy Christmas has been unchanged the past four years. It was 62 percent in both 2006 and 2005, and also 64 percent in 2004," SWS said in a statement issued yesterday.

Across areas, those anticipating a happy Christmas rose in Metro Manila and the Visayas, while they slightly declined in Mindanao. The numbers were the same as last year in Luzon outside Metro Manila.

Across socioeconomic classes, proportions of those expecting a happy Christmas increased this year among members of class E, but declined among the middle to upper classes.

The proportions of those anticipating a happy Christmas was highest in the Visayas (68 percent). It was 66 percent in Mindanao, 65 percent in the rest of Luzon and 55 percent in Metro Manila.

In Metro Manila, those who saw a happy Christmas rose 10 percentage points from 45 percent in 2006. Happy Christmases among Metro Manila respondents have been declining since 2002, when it was at 77 percent.

Expectations of a joyful Christmas were likewise up in the Visayas by eight percentage points, from 60 percent in 2006, the lowest recorded in the area. It reached a high of 85 percent in 2002 in the Visayas.

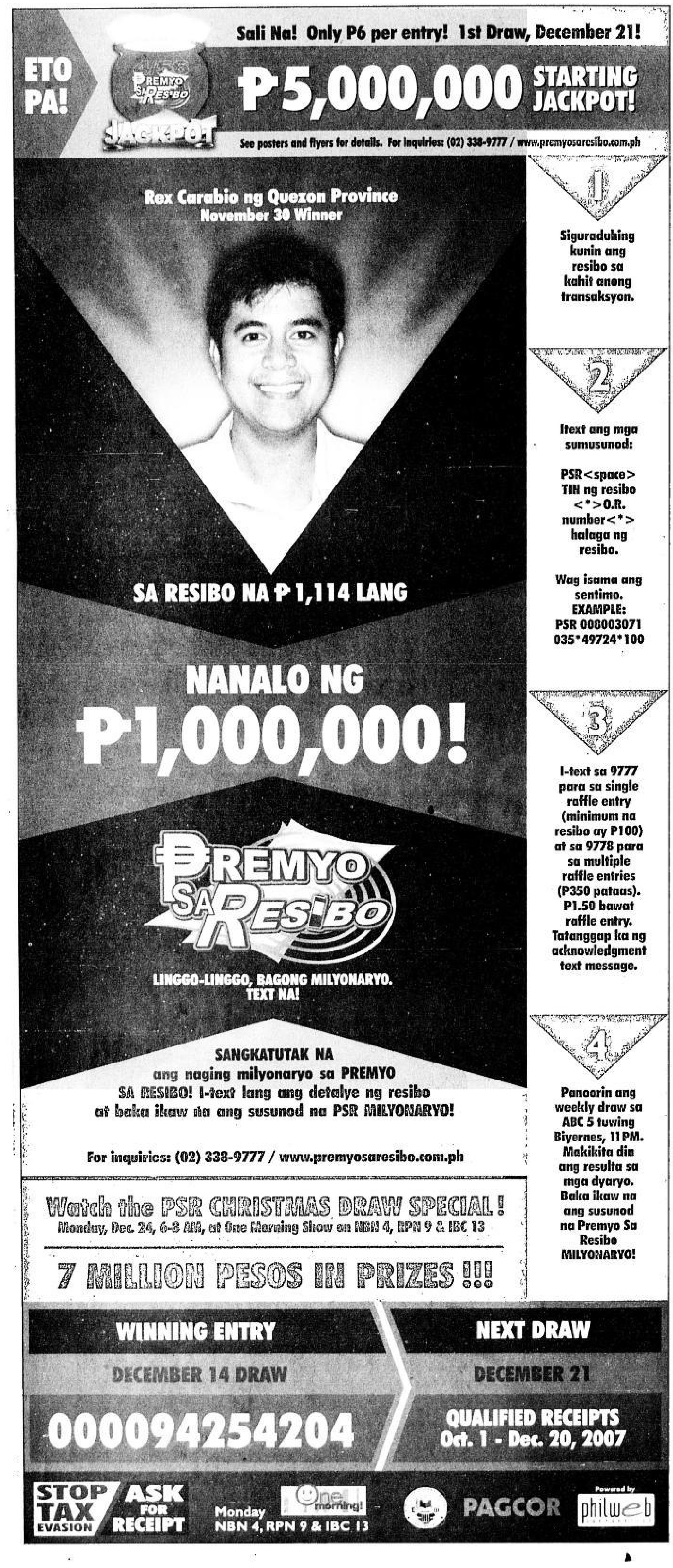
In Mindanao, expectations of a happy Christmas "slightly declined" from 70 percent in 2006 from 66 percent in 2007, the lowest recorded in Mindanao. It reached a high of 89 percent, also in 2002.

"Expectations of a happy Christmas is the same across all socioeconomic classes [at] 64 percent," SWS said. "Compared to 2006, however, the proportions of those expecting a happy Christmas increased among class E, but declined among the middle to upper classes ABC."

In class E, expectations of a happy Christmas "slightly rebounded" from 58 percent in 2006, which was the lowest recorded among this class.

Among members of classes ABC, expectations of a happy Christmas declined five percentage points from 69 percent in 2006, while the proportion of those anticipating a happy Christmas among class D was "similar" to last year's 62 percent.

"Slightly more" married respondents expect a happy Christmas (66 percent) compared to those widowed or separated (59 percent) and those who are single or never married (61 percent).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I-text sa 9777 para sa single raffle entry (minimum na resibo ay P100) at sa 9778 para sa multiple raffle entries (P350 pataas). P1.50 bawat raffle entry. Tatanggap ka ng acknowledgment text message.

4
Panoorin ang weekly draw sa ABC 5 tuwing Biyernes, 11 PM. Makikita din ang resulta sa mga dyaryo. Baka ikaw na ang susunod na Premyo Sa Resibo MILYONARYO!

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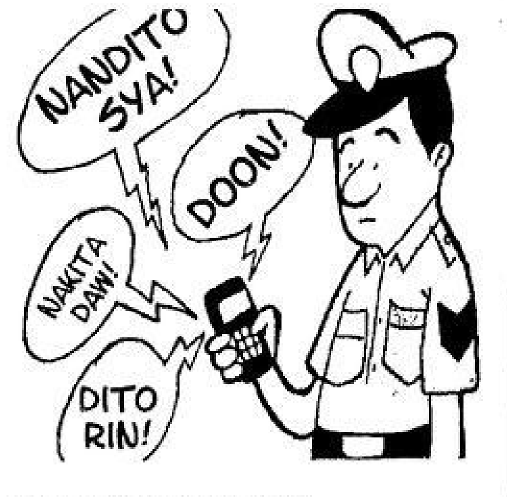
Fugitive Marine captain is new Elvis, says lawyer

By DJ Yap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DITO RIN!

MARINE CAPT. NICANOR FAELDON IS the new Elvis Presley—or so his lawyer says.

The label has nothing to do with the king of rock 'n roll, but rather with Faeldon's penchant for popping up everywhere, even in places he can't possibly be, said his lawyer, Trixie Angeles.

Missing since the Nov. 29 takeover of the Peninsula Manila, sightings of the 42-year-old Faeldon have been reported from Palawan to Davao, said Angeles.

"He's like Elvis. People see him everywhere," Angeles said after a court hearing yesterday on the 2003 Oakwood mutiny where Faeldon is also on trial.

A P1 million reward has been put up for any information on his whereabouts.

Text messages

On Wednesday night, a flurry of text messages circulated about "a new commotion in Makati," particularly at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, which supposedly involved Faeldon.

The rumor proved false, said Supt. Gilbert Cruz, the Makati chief-of-police, who deployed a SWAT squad around the hotel near the Peninsula.

"We had a tip from intelligence that Faeldon would go to the Makati Shang. We checked it out but found nothing," he told the INQUIRER.

Capt. Carlo Ferrer, Armed Forces of the Philippines-National Capital Region Command spokesman, said he, too, received phone calls late Wednesday night asking about the supposed Faeldon sighting.

"I checked it with our men on the ground and coordinated with the police. But they told me the report was not true," Ferrer said.

Chief Supt Luizo Ticman, Southern Police District director, said he deployed 50 policemen to support the hunt for Faeldon at Shangri-La, but the "tip proved negative."

"That's not his style," Angeles said.

In his previous escape, Faeldon made his presence felt in military facilities, not in luxury hotels.

Hoax

Angeles said friends, supporters and journalists had been calling her with purported tips about Faeldon's location, all of which proved to be a hoax.

"There was a caller who contacted a reporter in Davao and said he saw Faeldon. Then there were reports that he was allegedly interviewed by a local TV station. Then another person was saying he was seen in Palawan," Angeles said.

She maintained that there was not enough evidence to establish that her client had in fact escaped. She suspected that Faeldon was in military custody.

"Assuming without admitting that he escaped, I think it's a good thing that all these sighting are being reported because if the authorities check all of them out, it dissipates their energies and resources," she said.

Neither she nor Faeldon's family had received word from her client since the Peninsula incident, Angeles said.

In December 2005, Faeldon escaped from his military escorts, and while in hiding put up a website calling for civil disobedience campaign against the government. He was recaptured in January 2006.

With a report from Julie M. Aurelio

2 Pinays convicted of trafficking in HK

By Philip C. Tubeza
Correspondent

HONG KONG—CONVINCED BY THEIR VICtims' detailed testimony on the flesh trade here, a judge yesterday convicted two Filipino women in what prosecutors called a "landmark" human trafficking case.

District Judge Susana Maria D'Almada Remedios found Jennifer N. Balibat, 28, and Angelita A. David, 39, guilty of trafficking five Filipino women into Hong Kong in July to work as prostitutes in Wan Chai, the city's red-light district.

The judge sentenced the two to three years in prison after finding them guilty of two counts of human trafficking and five counts of aiding and abetting the breaching of the conditions of stay.

"On the evidence before me, I am satisfied the prosecution proved beyond reasonable doubt that the defendants are guilty on charges 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7," Remedios said.

Facts are clear

"The facts are very clear. You arranged for the five women to be brought to Hong Kong from the Philippines for the purpose of prostitution," she said.

Prosecutor Edward Le Breton Laskey urged the court to immediately release copies of the verdict, saying he had heard from investigators that even President Macapagal-Arroyo was interested in the case.

"This is the very first case involving the prosecution of Filipino nationals for this type of offense to be held outside the Philippines," Laskey told the court. "I understand this has generated a lot of interest ... even from the President of the Philippines."

Hong Kong police officers flew to Manila last month to talk to Department of Justice officials and Dante Ang, chair of the Presidential Task Force Against Trafficking, about the case.

The Hong Kong police also went to Nueva Ecija since the Philippine government had filed human trafficking charges there against Loida Villaflor, an alleged accomplice of Balibat and David.

The women—aged 24 to 39—were made to work as prostitutes because they owed the traffickers P60,000 for their air fare and accommodations.

Villaflor and David reportedly recruited the women in the Philippines while David and Balibat picked them up when they arrived at the Hong Kong airport in two groups late last July.

Remedios said she believed the victims' account that David and Balibat had urged them to look for customers willing to pay for sex so they could repay the P60,000 immediately.

They were told they could earn from HK$400 to HK$2,000 if they chose the right customer.

"(One of the victims) was told by (Balibat) not to go out with Chinese men because they might report her to the police. (She) was also advised to avoid Indians and Pakistanis because they could be very rude," the judge said.

She said the victims were also warned about Indians "who would not pay" and might even beat them.

Balibat advised the women to look for black men because of their "size."

The victims sought the help of the Philippine consulate and the police because, contrary to the traffickers' promises, they were not adequately fed and were housed in cramped apartments.

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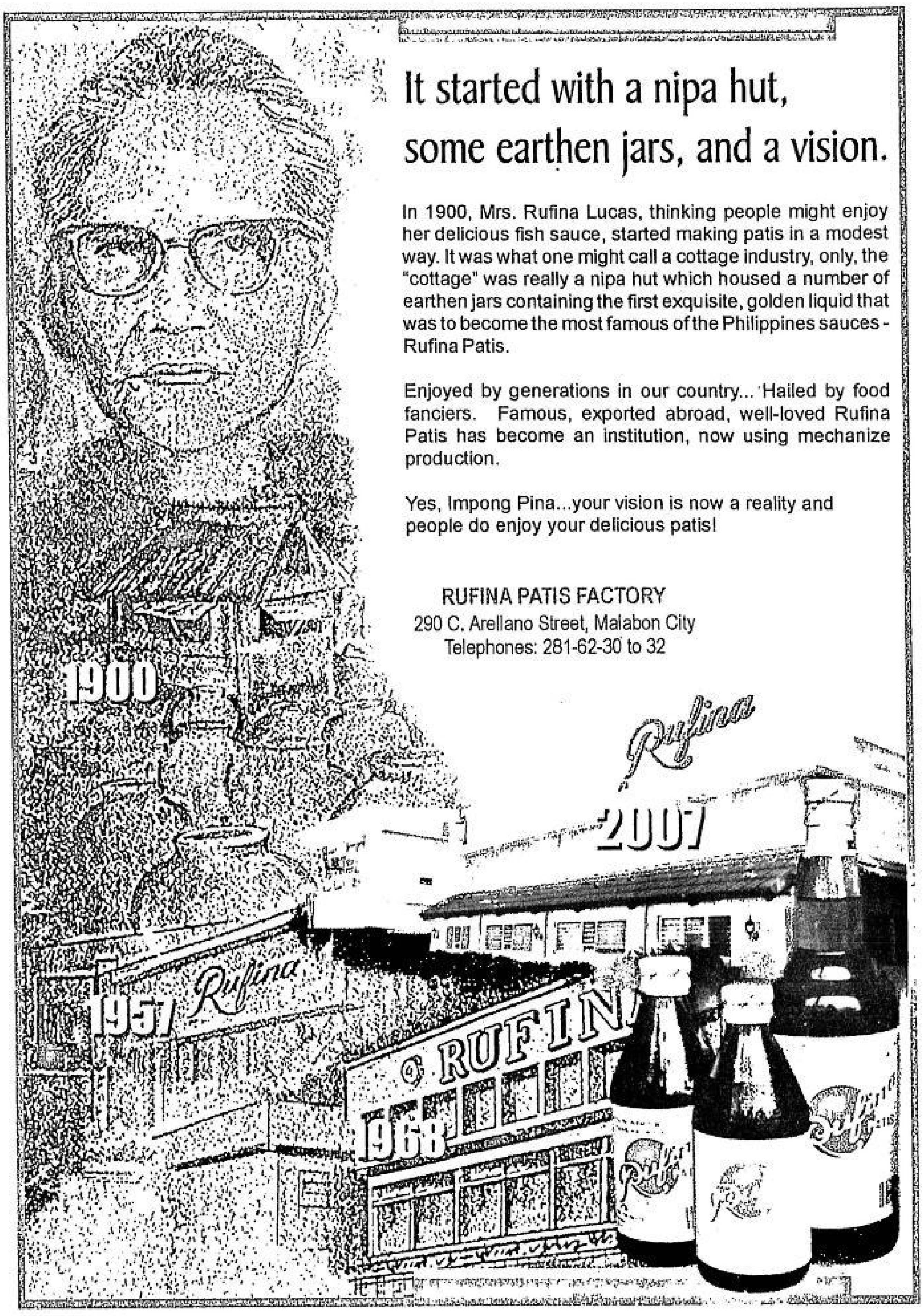

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53 Oakwood rebels freed

From page A1

Esperon said Ms Arroyo had additionally granted a commutation of the four-year prison terms of the mutineers, which would set them free on Jan. 27 next year.

"Rather than have them wait up to Jan. 27, the President decided to commute that by more than a month so that they could enjoy Christmas with their families," Esperon said.

Reinstatement

It was not clear if the mutineers were dishonorably discharged. But Esperon said they could be reinstated if they made a manifestation through a formal letter to the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"We are not closing ... all doors to this. So if there are indeed appeals, then we will consider that," Esperon said.

He said that a number of the mutineers had expressed the desire to be reinstated. But he said this would have to undergo "strict processing."

"That is for us to evaluate," Esperon said when asked about the possible dangers of reinstating formerly rebellious officers. "These are officers who have shown remorse, and the capacity to reform, and so we don't want to say that they will become recidivists," he said.

"This will be part of our consideration, especially in light of the Nov. 29 (standoff at the Peninsula Manila hotel) where we saw some recidivists not only for the second time, but for the third time or more," Esperon added.

Core leaders

The 54 officers were among the 61 subleaders of the so-called Magdalo group that staged the Oakwood mutiny and later struck a plea bargain for a lesser offense.

They do not include the 29 core leaders, 12 of whom were dishonorably discharged in July after pleading guilty to conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

The sentence on the 12 officers is awaiting Ms Arroyo's approval.

Seven other subleaders who did not enter a plea bargain remains detained.

On July 27, 2003, more than 300 junior military officers and enlisted personnel took over the posh Oakwood luxury apartments and hotel in Makati City for 23 hours to demand the resignation of Ms Arroyo, alleging widespread corruption in her administration.

LAST DAY IN COURT. Air Force Lt. Ashley Acedillo, one of the alleged leaders of the failed mutiny, is also home free after he's escorted out of the Makati Regional Trial Court. REM ZAMORA

During the Nov. 29 hearing on the Oakwood case, Trillanes, the Magdalo spokesperson who later won as senator in the May elections while campaigning from his jail cell, walked out and marched on the Peninsula Manila, along with Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, who was a defense witness.

Lim, former commandant of the Scout Rangers, has been detained for alleged involvement in the February 2006 failed coup.

Oakwood trial

At the resumption yesterday of the Oakwood trial, Judge Oscar Pimentel of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148 denied a defense motion that he inhibit himself from the trial for "prejudging" it.

Security was tight but only about half the number of military escorts was deployed after an "adjustment" of the detail from the previous hearing was made, said AFP-National Capital Region Command spokesperson Capt. Carlo Ferrer.

AFP OFFICERS GRANTED EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY

1Lt. Jeffrey A. Cauguiran	O-12238 PA
1Lt. Jose Enrico M. Dingle	O-12248 PA
1Lt. Julius R. Navales	O-12654 PA
1Lt. Emerson L. Margate	O-12676 PA
2Lt. Laurefel P. Gabales	O-13088 PA
2Lt. Regino S. Orteza	O-13128 PA
2Lt. Jeoffrey C. Tacio	O-1137 PA
2Lt. Archibald S. Raniel	O-13194 PA
2Lt, Noel F. Tomonglay	O-13215 PA
2Lt. Nestor Jason V. Camba Jr.	O-13221 PA
2Lt. Ryan H. Quisai	O-13272 PA
2Lt. Wary James A. Tayaban	O-13529 PA
Ltsg. Norberto E. Santiago Jr.	O-11974 PN
Ltjg. Ronald A. Galicia	O-12354 PN
Ltjg. Marco Angelo J. Ancheta	O-12427 PN
Ltjg. Ceferino M. Checa III	O-12841 PN
1Lt. Jonathan P. Costales	O-12897 PN(M)
Ens. Juvenal B. Azurin	O-13121 PN
Ens. Rex P. Calano	O-13123 PN
Ens. Elmer D. Cruz	O-13165 PN
Ens. Emerson R. Rosales	O-13177 PN
Ens. Jonathan Jay J. Adlawan	O-13270 PN
Ens. Jonah A. Arugay	O-13274 PN
Ens. Jeffrey A. Bangsa	O-13285 PN
Ens. Cesar Carmel P. Tamba	O-13358 PN
Ens. Jeffrey Samuel A. Daquilanea	O-14377 PN
Ens. Lyle G. Rosos	O-13499 PN
Ens. Bryan B. Babang	O-13507 PN
Ens. Arjohn B. Elumba	O-13519 PN
Ens. Ronald E. Diso	O-13627 PN
Ens. Ian Luis D. Badecao III	O-13689 PN
Ens. Victor S. Odulio	O-13727 PN
1Lt. Ronald Allan D.G. Ricardo	O-13277 PN(M)
2Lt. Danny C. Cañaveral	O-131390 PN(M)
2Lt. Filmore G. Rull	O-13237 PN(M)
2Lt. Oswald Ian B. Dira	O-13351 PN(M)
2Lt. Samsudin T. Lintongan	O-13732 PN(M)
2Lt. Leopoldo D.G. Apillanes Jr.	O-13746 PN(M)
2Lt. Mark P. Damaso	O-135565 PN(M)
2Lt. Giovanni M. Pallan	O-135569 PN(M)
2Lt. Edgardo R. Aguilar	O-135570 PN(M)
2Lt. Norman Spencer O. Lo	O-13817 PN(M)
2Lt. Larry C. Cendaña	O-13831 PN(M)
2Lt. Havelino A. Salih	O-13853 PN(M)
2Lt. Lexington V. Alonzo	O-13884 PN(M)
1Lt. Wilfredo D. Camacho	O-12902 PAF
2Lt. Mark Dennis C. Derecho	O-13181 PAF
2Lt. Charleston M. Tan	O-13297 PAF
2Lt. Archie A. Grande	O-13354 PAF
2Lt. Jeveehboy N. Macarubbo	O-13431 PAF
2Lt. Joel B. Plaza	O-13501 PAF
2Lt. Adrian G. Alvariño	O-13508 PAF
2Lt. Jigger P. Montallana	O-13680

Trillanes was absent, as well as the other Magdalo officers who joined the Nov. 29 takeover of the Peninsula Manila, for which they were charged with rebellion in another Makati court. *With a report from DJ Yap*

Andaya: GMA P30-B ...

From page A1

At its last session on Wednesday night before going on a monthlong break, the House of Representatives and the Senate failed to hammer out a final version of next year's GAA, paving the way for the government to operate on a reenacted budget in the first few months of 2008.

Andaya was seeking to rebut allegations by opposition Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson that Ms Arroyo's "pork" amounted to P30 billion, to include her intelligence and antipoverty funds, P3-billion Kilos Asenso fund, P1-billion Kalayaan sa Barangay programs, and over-allotment for debt service.

The budget secretary said Ms Arroyo's discretionary fund only amounted to P800 million (contingent fund) although she also had access to P600 million in intelligence funds tucked away in the budget of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF).

Ms Arroyo also has a say in the disbursement of the budget of the Office of the President amounting to P5.2 billion (the PAOCTF budget is included in the OP budget).

Andaya further claimed that the administration of the P2 billion calamity fund had been transferred from the Office of the President to the National Disaster Coordinating Council, an agency under Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro.

Lacson yesterday asked the Palace to account for the unused portions of the lawmakers' pork barrel as he claimed that more than half of the PDAF was being pilfered in the form of commissions.

"What happens to the P200-million pork barrel that is not used? Malacañang should make a full accounting of where this pork barrel goes," Lacson said in an interview on dzXL.

Some senators' pork withheld

Malacañang has withheld the funds appropriated for Senators Antonio Trillanes IV, Rodolfo Biazon, Richard Gordon and Legarda, according to Lacson.

Lacson said that his staff had followed the trail of a pork barrel allocation and discovered that less than 50 percent of the amount went to the intended project while the rest went to the lawmaker and his cohorts.

"We really have to monitor this pork barrel because it is difficult to see the 'hocus pocus' up front," said Lacson.

Lacson also claimed that some unscrupulous senators and congressmen, who want to get pork, resort to discreet insertions in the budgets of favored agencies, such as the Department of Public Works and Highways and the Department of Interior and Local Government, to get more pork.

"They talk directly to their beneficiaries in the recipient agencies obviously to discuss their commissions," he said.

The Senate agreed to adopt the two antipoverty programs in its version of the proposed budget only after rigid safeguards were adopted to check abuses.

Unconstitutional

Over dinner with INQUIRER editors and reporters Wednesday night, Andaya said that bloating the total amount of the programmed items was "unconstitutional" because Congress had no power to increase the proposed budget submitted by the President,

So as not to increase the total amount of the budget, the House panel chaired by Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman cut by P17.8 billion the appropriation for interest payments, which originally amounted to P295.75 billion.

The House realigned part of the cut to other areas, such as a P4.7-billion increase to the Department of Health's budget.

Senators Lacson and Loren Legarda said that due to the stronger Philippine currency, Malacañang should cut debt service payments and reallocate the "savings" for social services.

Congress can slash, but not add to the total amount (P1.227 trillion), said Andaya. "You can't increase the budget proposal of the President."

He said Congress' authority only covered the P770.73 billion representing programmed appropriations.

"They can't touch the P295.75 billion in interest payments and P210.73 billion in internal revenue allotment because they are mandated by law," said the budget chief, who had held the chairmanship of the House appropriations committee several times before assuming his current post.

Additional spending

Andaya said reallocating any cuts from interest payments would translate into additional spending.

"(The insertion has) legal problems and fiscal risks because you don't have the cash to pay for the P17 billion. Where will you get the money for this?" he said at a press conference.

He said the increase in the budget of the agriculture sector that the Senate had been asking for had already been included in the budget submitted by Ms Arroyo to Congress, along with increases in the budgets of the education and health departments.

"This early, we are giving the signal already about what action [Malacañang] might take if they insist," Andaya said, warning that Ms Arroyo might be forced to veto the budget bill if Congress insisted on the insertion.

Veto an option

Expressing disgust over the budget deadlock, Malacañang threatened to scrap the budget bill for 2008 after the House effectively padded the proposed new programmed appropriations by as much as P17.8 billion.

"That's an option," said Andaya when asked if President Macapagal-Arroyo would veto the budget bill.

He asked Congress to reconsider its move by restoring the P17 billion to the debt service appropriation.

"Even if President Arroyo signs the budget bill today, we can't beat the Dec. 31 deadline," he said.

Ms Arroyo has 30 days to come up with a "veto message" on the final version to be submitted by the bicameral conference committee and duly ratified by both chambers of Congress, Andaya said.

But if she decides to sign it, the law requires a 15-day publication period before the new budget can take effect.

De Venecia: Cut off pork

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said Malacañang's supposed "pork barrel" in the proposed 2008 budget should be cut if Lacson's reading of the Palace allocations proved accurate.

"It should be scaled down to more manageable levels," De Venecia said.

Asked what a "manageable" level would be for Palace funds, De Venecia said: "That's what we have to look into and discuss."

De Venecia expressed confidence that the Senate and the House panels as well as the administration and opposition coalitions would reach an agreement so that the proposed GAA could be enacted by early next year or "sometime in February."

He appeared resigned to the reenactment of the budget for at least the first two months of the year.

"The Constitution has a mechanism to prevent paralysis when the budget has yet to be passed and that is the reenactment of the (previous year's) budget," De Venecia said. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Have a merry Christmas and green ...

From page A1

Philippines 2007 Jeanne Harn, launched "Iwas PaputTOXIC 2008" at the Esteban Abada Elementary School in Project 7, Quezon City.

The campaign is meant to highlight the toxic effects of firecrackers on persons, animals and the environment, and, at the same time, promote the use of alternative "noisemakers" for the New Year revelry.

Alternative noisemakers include tambourines made of bottle caps, maracas from tin cans, cymbals using aluminum pot lids, shakers made of plastic bottles, cans or soap and toothpaste boxes filled with seeds, and even coins.

And of course, there's the reliable *torotot* (horn).

Making safe noise

"Since we want to make noise on New Year's Eve, why don't we use safe alternatives to firecrackers that injure people and pose hazards to health and the environment?" EcoWaste's youth campaigner LJ Pasion said in a phone interview.

"Firecrackers cause air pollution, leave a pile of trash, and cause injuries to persons. So we decided to promote clean and safer alternatives," Pasion said.

The tradition of lighting firecrackers has "a history of blown-off fingers, burned skin, and other bloody injuries," hence the need for safe alternatives, he said.

According to Pasion, New Year revelers need not look far for recyclable materials for the alternative noisemakers because these can be found in one's household and backyard.

"With a little creativity, we can come up with alternatives to firecrackers," he said.

Mind the animals

Added Harn in a statement: "We encourage the public to avoid firecrackers and employ safer and cleaner means of celebrating the coming of the New Year, so as to help create a healthier environment for one and all."

The EcoWaste Coalition cited the ill effects of firecrackers on animals, who are more vulnerable to loud blasts and explosions because of their keener sense of hearing.

It backed the Department of Health's proposal to ban firecrackers and other pyrotechnics in residential areas to prevent injuries and deaths in the run-up to the New Year celebration.

PVC cannon most injurious

Some 1,300 people, mostly children, were hurt by firecrackers from Dec. 21, 2006, to Jan. 7, 2007. Seven percent of the injuries required amputations, the coalition said, citing DOH figures.

The top contributor to firework injuries was the popular "boga" or PVC cannon, followed by the piccolo, five star, and whistle bombs, it said.

The EcoWaste Coalition has been promoting the use of safe noisemakers for the past two holiday seasons.

Putin is Time's 'Man of the Year'

From page A1

from relative obscurity to be prime minister in 1999 by then President Boris Yeltsin, will appear on the cover of a special issue of Time as the person the editors believe had the greatest impact on events, for better or worse.

"He's not a good guy, but he's done extraordinary things," said Stengel.

The magazine noted that "Person of the Year" is not an honor or endorsement but a recognition of leadership that shapes the world.

"He's the new czar of Russia and he's dangerous in the sense that he doesn't care about civil liberties, he doesn't care about free speech," Stengel said. "But stability is what Russia needed and that's why Russians adore him."

In prizing stability over freedom, he has made Russia powerful again and beholden to no nation, the magazine said.

Cost to principles

Time said that Putin, 55, the son of a factory worker whose grandfather cooked for Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, had led Russia with persistence, a sharp vision and a sense that he embodied the spirit of "Mother Russia."

Time said the Person of the Year distinction, which it has awarded since 1927, was not an endorsement or a popularity prize but a recognition of the individuals and forces that shape the world.

"At significant cost to the principles and ideas that free nations prize, (Putin) has performed an extraordinary feat of leadership in imposing stability on a nation that has rarely known it and brought Russia back to the table of world power."

The magazine said it picked Putin because of his role in making Moscow "a critical linchpin of the 21st century."

Putin's dark side

However, the magazine highlighted a dark side to Putin's success.

"Putin is not a boy scout. He is not a democrat in any way that the West would define it. He is not a paragon of free speech," Stengel wrote.

"He stands, above all, for stability—stability before freedom, stability before choice, stability in a country that has hardly seen it for a hundred years."

Putin beat out four rivals for the Time distinction—former US Vice President Al Gore, who was Time's No. 2 choice, followed by British author J.K. Rowling, Chinese President Hu Jintao and the US commander in Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus.

Away from the abyss

Putin is enormously popular in Russia, presiding over a resurgent economy flush with revenue from oil and natural gas. But critics say he has moved away from democracy by tightening control of the courts, parliament and the media.

The last Soviet president, Mikhail Gorbachev, who was named Man of the Decade by Time in 1989 for his world-changing reforms, said Putin was a good choice for stabilizing the country.

"If Putin did only that—led the country away from the abyss, from division and disintegration, that is already a historic deed," Gorbachev told Ekho Moskvy radio.

Putin is the fifth Russian or Soviet leader to be named Person of the Year—Gorbachev, Andropov, Khrushchev and Stalin, who was named twice.

Clashes with US

Russia's return to international status has led to complicated relations between Putin and the United States on issues including US efforts to pressure Iran about its nuclear program.

"Obviously he's a very intriguing figure in modern history," said White House spokesperson Dana Perino, who otherwise declined to comment on Time's selection.

After meeting Putin for the first time in 2001, President George W. Bush said: "I looked the man in the eye. I found him to be very straightforward and trustworthy."

But Putin and the White House have since clashed in several areas including democratic reform in Russia and US plans for a missile shield in Eastern Europe. In February, Putin accused the United States of trying to dominate the world.

Mocked by Kasparov

Chess legend and Kremlin political opponent Garry Kasparov said the magazine's choice followed "the Kremlin's official propaganda."

Putin taunted Kasparov in an interview with Time, saying the former chess champion should speak in Russian rather than English when in Russia.

"If you aspire to be a leader of your own country, you must speak your own language, for God's sake," Putin said.

Kasparov ended his long-shot bid for Russia's presidency last week, saying his challenge had been crushed by Kremlin meddling.

Putin also said Russia wanted to be a close ally of the United States but that Washington did not treat it as an equal.

A bit of a savage

"Sometimes we get the impression that America does not need friends" but only "auxiliary subjects to command," Putin said.

Asked if he'd like to correct any American misconceptions about Russia, Putin told Time: "I don't believe these are misconceptions. I think this is a purposeful attempt by some to create an image of Russia based on which one could influence our internal and foreign policies.

"This is the reason why everybody is made to believe ... (Russians) are a little bit savage still or they just climbed down from the trees, you know, and probably need to have ... the dirt washed out of their beards and hair."

Like Bush, Putin identifies terrorism as a key threat of the 21st century, but declined to label the threat Islamic saying that "radicals ... can be found in any environment." *Reports from Reuters, AP and AFP*

No more oil price hikes this year

By Abigail L. Ho

MOTORISTS HAVE REASON TO cheer this holiday season: Oil firms have committed not to adjust prices—at least for the rest of the year.

Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. country chair Edgar Chua and Petron Corp. chair Nicasio Alcantara said in separate interviews that there would be no price movements, whether upward or downward, for 2007.

"More or less there will be no movements in oil prices. Everything depends on market forces right now, so if market forces don't dictate the need to move, prices will be kept at current levels," Chua told reporters.

The oil firm, however, still had to recover around 50 centavos to P1 a liter for diesel, he said, without giving a specific time as to when this would be recouped from consumers.

Last increase

Fuel prices last moved almost two weeks ago, with oil firms jacking up gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices by 50 centavos a liter and liquefied petroleum gas prices by P1.12 a kilogram.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the regional benchmark Dubai crude slightly dropped to $84.93 a barrel in the first 19 days of December from $86.87 a barrel last month. In October, Dubai crude price was pegged at $77.12 a barrel.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products fell to an average of $97.52 a barrel as of Dec. 19 from the November average of $100.29 a barrel. The average price was placed at only $88.71 in October.

MOPS-based diesel likewise went down to an average of $108.03 a barrel in the Dec. 1-19 period, from an average of $110.19 a barrel last month. October's average was placed at $95.47 a barrel.

LPG at all-time high

The international contract price of LPG rose to an all-time high of $877.50 per metric ton (MT) in December, $130 higher than the November contract price of $747.50 per MT.

This fuel price hike was the 17th for gasoline for a total of P9.50 a liter, the 14th for diesel for a total of P7 a liter, and also the 14th for kerosene for a total of P7.50 a liter.

Since the start of the year, LPG prices have risen 15 times for a total of P12.88 a kilo, but have also gone down seven times for a total of P3.36 a kilo, including VAT.

The price of premium unleaded gasoline ranged between P42.53 and P45.77 a liter; diesel, between P35.41 and P38.53 a liter; kerosene, between P39.80 and P44.30 a liter; 11-kilogram LPG cylinder, between P594 and P650.

Esperanza D. Jones; 89

ESPERANZA DACUYCUY Jones died on Dec. 15 after suffering a heart attack. She was 89.

Her remains lie at the Merville subdivision chapel in Parañaque City. The 10 a.m. funeral Mass will be followed by cremation at Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, December 21, 2007
3rd Week of Advent
Peter Canisius

1st Reading: Song 2:8-14
Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

Mary then set out for a town in the Hills of Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with holy spirit, and giving a loud cry, said, "You are most blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! How is it that the mother of my Lord comes to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leapt for joy. Blessed are you who believed that the Lord's word would come true!"

Commentary

God comes to us, like a lover to a beloved, one on one. And he stands here in our presence, gazing at us and speaking to us to "arise and come" for it is the time of spring on the earth. Are our voices attuned to the voice and the Word of our beloved, our God who comes to us and will stay with us? Our God comes to us and we are called to rejoice for we have had our reproach removed from us and we are saved from our enemies (within and without). Our God is in our midst-Emmanuel. There is no room for fear now—in fact it is our God who will sing over us because our God has become human, one of us!

Mary goes to Jerusalem in haste (running for her life for help from Elizabeth). She greets her, "Peace be with you!"—the Easter proclamation of the gospel. This is the Word of the Lord in Mary coming to announce his presence in the world to the one who goes before him—the voice: John in the womb of Elizabeth. God is loose in the world—now there are four who know the presence of God with us. The Spirit ricochets back and forth among the four of them. Our God comes to us in the Word—do we bring this Word to all we meet, in our need? And do we come to each other's aid, in the spirit and in the flesh? This is visitation—our God is always coming towards us. Can we see?

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Adboard censures Star for making false clain

From page A1

complaint filed by the Philippine Daily Inquirer, one of the two other papers depicted in the disputed ad, the other being the Manila Bulletin.

In a ruling dated Dec. 6, the Adboard cited the "absence of data to support the claim made" in the ad, which came out Nov. 29 and carried the headline: "More advertisers are reaching consumers through the Philippine Star than any other major daily."

The asterisk pointed the reader to a lower-fold text that read: "The Nielsen Media Research Print Advertising Information Service shows that when it comes to advertising, we have a bigger slice of the pie than the other major newspapers."

But, according to a complaint filed on behalf of the INQUIRER by ad firm McCann Erickson, the Nielsen figures quoted in the ad referred specifically to the Star's ad revenues—or the "ad spaces" the paper had sold—as compared to its major rivals.

"The data presented does not indicate 'more advertisers' are reaching consumers through the Star, only that more ad space is purchased. The data is inaccurately presented and done so in a misleading manner," the complaint said.

INQUIRER reaches more people

The claim was challenged in view of the latest survey showing that the INQUIRER reaches more readers than any other paper.

The complaint furnished the Adboard with the results of the Nielsen Media Index Wave 1 Study for 2007, which showed that both the INQUIRER and the Bulletin exceed the Star in actual readership nationwide.

In the study that asked respondents which paper they had read yesterday, the INQUIRER scored 54.25 percent; the Bulletin, 46.85 percent, and the Star, 42.29 percent.

The board, through its Advertising Content Regulation Committee (ACRC), ruled that the unsubstantiated headline—"More advertisers are reaching ..." violated Sec. 1.16, Art. IV of the Code.

That section governing ad "presentation" states:

"Corporate advertising must be fair, truthful and accurate; it should not contain any exaggerations or sweeping generalizations that may mislead the public regarding the advertiser or the attributes of the products or services.

Claims must be verified

"Where the advertisements contain specific claims regarding the company or its products or services, such claims must be verifiable and subject to substantiation in the same manner as regular product or service advertisements."

Also, the ACRC upheld the INQUIRER's view about the disparaging images in the Star ad.

Bigger slice?

The ad's main visual is a top-view shot of three people sharing a small round table and each reading a different newspaper. From this perspective, the papers' main folds (or what in books would be called the "spine") join at the table's center, while the top edge of the pages closely form a three-point star, thus dividing the tabletop into three sectors as in a pie graph.

The person reading the Star (with its logo clearly visible) had opened his paper at an angle wider than the others, thus taking up more space on the table or having "a bigger slice of the pie." The two other papers, the INQUIRER and the Manila Bulletin, are recognizable by their runners

The ad's "(v)isuali
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Sec. 2.1, Article IV of

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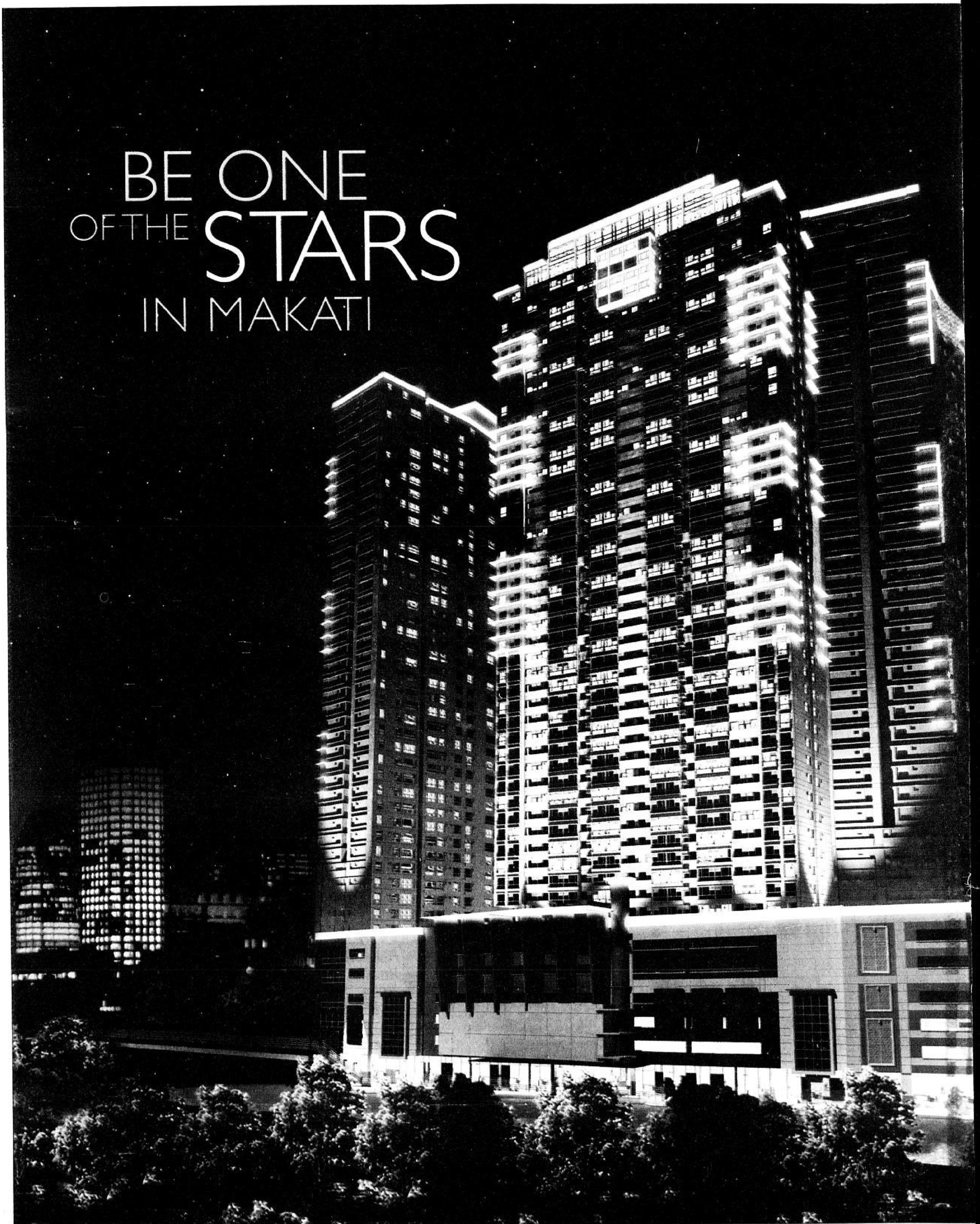

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CHILD IN THE DUMPS
A charcoal maker carries her child in a garbage dump where hundreds live and make a living recycling waste in Tondo. REUTERS

Oops! Palace clarifies long ...

From page A1

clare these days as special nonworking holidays," said Severo "Nonoy" Catura, an undersecretary in the Office of the Executive Secretary.

The option of granting long holidays to employees in the private sector rests with employers, said Catura.

Just like in the government, it's up to employers or heads of offices to decide whether to come up with a skeletal force in the afternoon of Dec. 23, he said.

Special nonworking day

The government has declared Dec. 24 (Monday) a special nonworking day under Presidential Proclamation No. 1211.

Christmas Day is a regular holiday, so is Dec. 30 (Rizal Day) and New Year's Day.

Dec. 31 (New Year's Eve) is a nationwide special holiday under Republic Act No. 9492.

This clarification came after Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said at his regular press conference Wednesday that a long Christmas holiday and a long New Year holiday awaited employees.

Back to work Dec. 26

Ermita said that the long Christmas holiday—at least for state employees who do not go to work on weekends—would start on Dec. 22 (Saturday) and end on Tuesday (Dec. 25).

Employees in government and private offices are expected to be at work on Dec. 26 (Wednesday) until Dec. 28 (Friday), he said.

For government workers—except those in vital departments and agencies—the four-day New Year holiday begins on Dec. 29 (Saturday) and ends on Jan. 1 (Tuesday).

200 percent

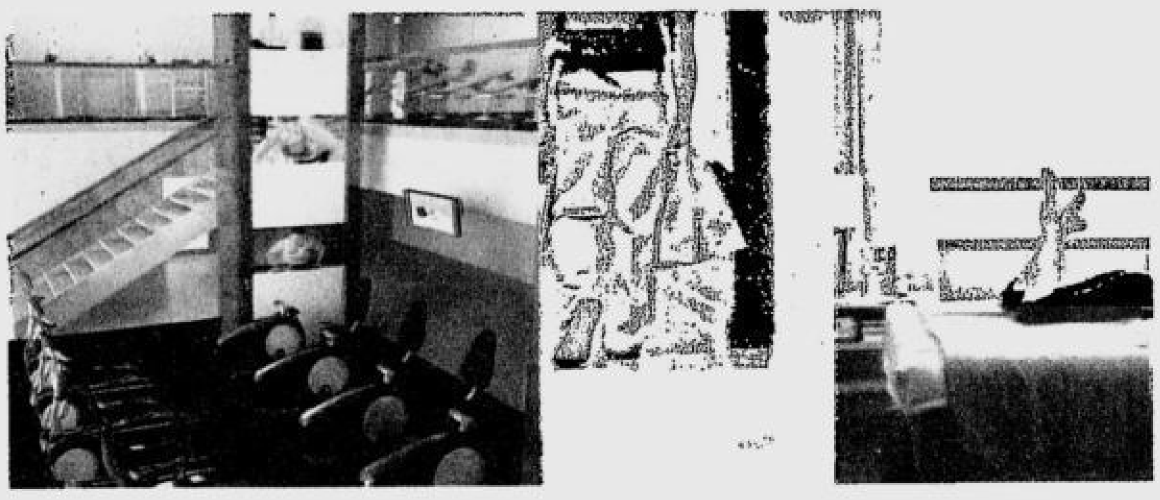
Under the Labor Code, employers must pay those who report for work on legal holidays 200 percent of the daily rate of their employees.

On special holidays, employers must pay an additional 30 percent over the regular rate.

The President may declare other special holidays from time to time.

The legal holidays are Jan. 1 (New Year), April 9 (Bataan Day), May 1 (Labor Day), Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, June 12 (Independence Day), Aug. 31 (National Heroes Day), the end of Ramadan, Nov. 1 (All Saints' Day), Nov. 30 (Bonifacio Day), Christmas Day and Dec. 30.

Considered special holidays are Aug. 21 (Ninoy Aquino Day), Nov. 1, Election Day, Dec. 24, Dec. 31 (New Year's Eve) and Black Saturday.



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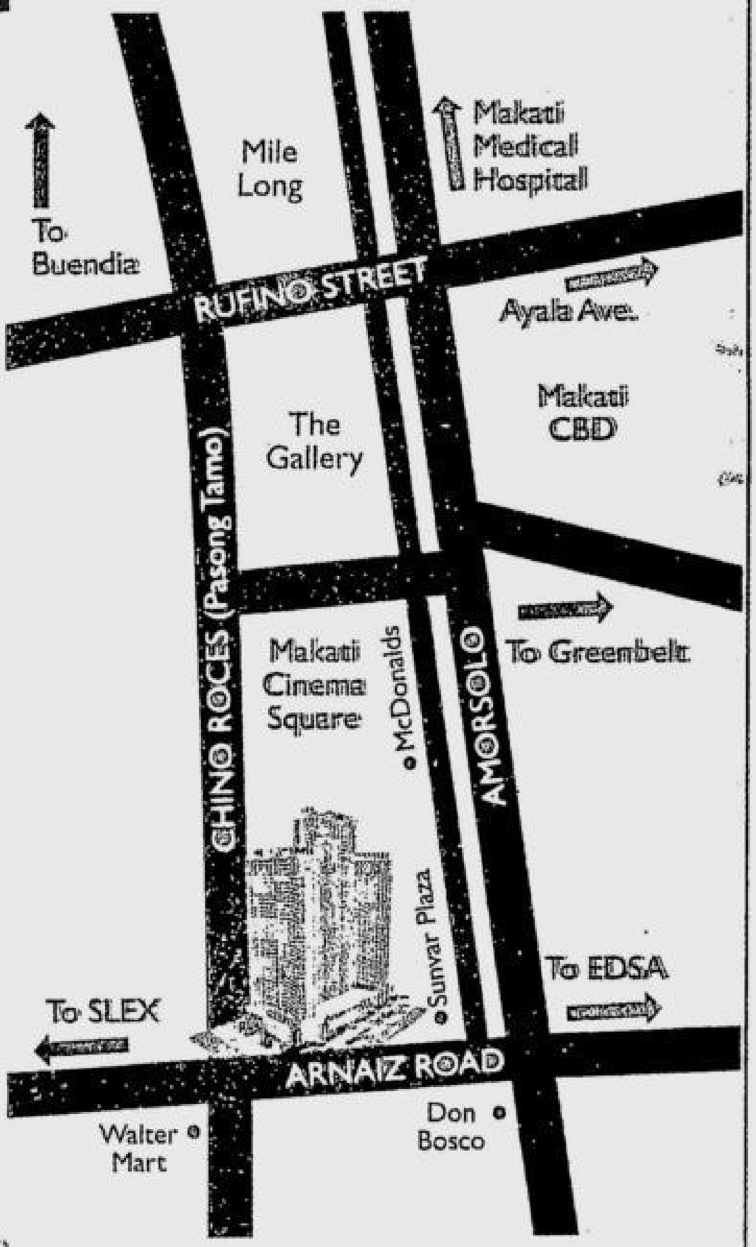

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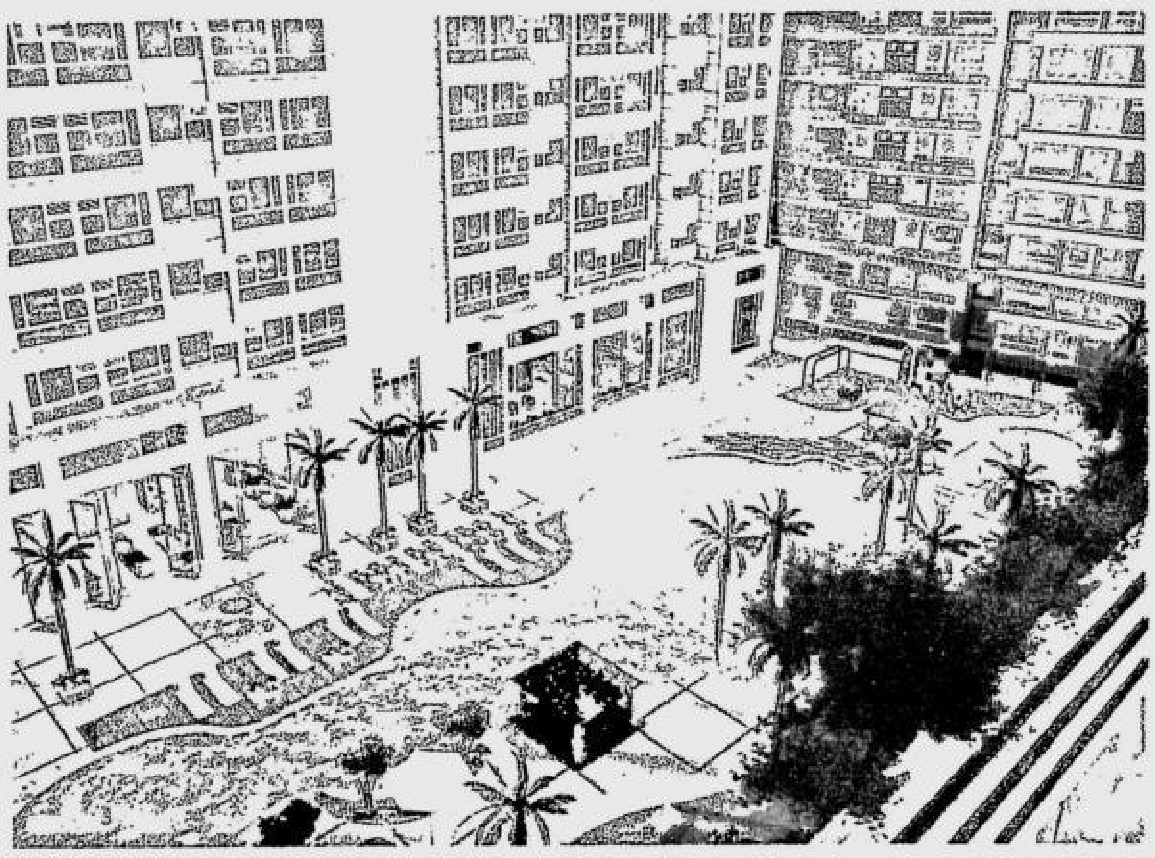

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Writ of Esperon

EDITORIAL

IN CHARACTERISTIC FASHION, THE ARROYO ADministration is testing the waters for a controversial decision-in-the-making. After a troubled and troubling tradition of revolving-door appointments to the crucial position of Armed Forces chief of staff, it is now poised—or, rather, it is positioning itself—to extend the appointment of Gen. Hermogenes Esperon.

The Arroyo way of testing the waters is to make like a duck: to float serenely above the water, but to paddle furiously under it. The idea that Esperon, President Macapagal-Arroyo's loyal comrade-in-arms, should be given more time at the helm of the military is being peddled actively by persons allied with the President, but at the same time it is being actively denied by other allies—with Ms Arroyo herself observing a duck-like nonchalance.

It is clear, of course, that the President enjoys the privilege of extending the term of the AFP chief if necessity dictates or policy requires. It is a privilege, however, that is attended by a bodyguard of responsibilities. Foremost of these is the duty to make the extension serve the national interest. It is difficult to see any extension of Esperon's term in this light.

Esperon has shown his Commander in Chief utmost fidelity, especially when as Army commander he stopped another episode of misguided military adventurism in February 2006. He has also played a leading role in the AFP's deliberately heavy-handed treatment of both the July 2003 mutineers and the February 2006 adventurists.

But overriding loyalty to the Commander in Chief is the quality one looks for in a commander of the presidential guard (which, in fact, Esperon was). The AFP chief of staff, however, must place both the national interest and the interest of the military as the protector of democracy above that of the President. This is exactly the thing that Esperon has failed to do.

He has not risen above his formative experience as commanding officer of the Palace guard. He has failed, despite his unremitting effort to rid the ranks of military messiahs-in-the-making, to de-politicize the military.

In a word, he has acted as a partisan.

Under his term, Esperon has also failed to stop the spree of politically motivated killings that will forever haunt his Commander in Chief's legacy. Indeed, he has gone out of his way to spite the United Nations special rapporteur, who was invited by the Arroyo administration to conduct an investigation into the killings. Like that of the controversial ex-general Jovito Palparan, Esperon's name will be linked to the killings for all time—if only because he remains, to this day, aggressively in denial.

His partisan defensiveness against UN delegate Philip Alston is part of a pattern of truculence in matters of justice and obsequiousness. Consider the legal or political battles over the Mayuga report, over the Jonas Burgos case, over the Peninsula Manila incident—indeed, over the damaging disclosures in the Hello Garci tapes.

This track record does not inspire confidence that, if an over-assertive Executive instructs the armed services to do the non-democratic thing, its chief of staff will stand up for the nation's true interest. Extending Esperon's term will definitely be good for President Arroyo's interests and it would be her very own version of the Supreme Court's writ of amparo. We can't say, however, that it will be good for that of the military or of the nation as a whole.

'Over-godfather'

FOREIGN COMMENT

IT LOOKS LIKE THE PRESIDENTIAL QUESTION IN RUSSIA HAS been solved as Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev clearly became the overwhelmingly favorite candidate after support from President Vladimir Putin and the United Russia party. There is no reason to believe that the Russians themselves won't choose him as the country's next president in the March election.

Putin will continue to be the Russian godfather. He sidestepped intelligence circles and chose Medvedev who is accomplished in softer issues. The Russian word "medved" means bear. However, Medvedev is more like a teddy than an angry grizzly that has been woken from its winter slumbers. Medvedev will try to be the godfather of a better future Russia, but the godfather will himself have a godfather. This over-godfather is Vladimir Putin, whose future occupation is still surrounded by speculation.

Something however was revealed when Medvedev suggested in a TV appearance that Putin should become the prime minister. Medvedev would not say what Putin should do without the latter's permission.

Ilta-Sanomat (Helsinki, Finland)

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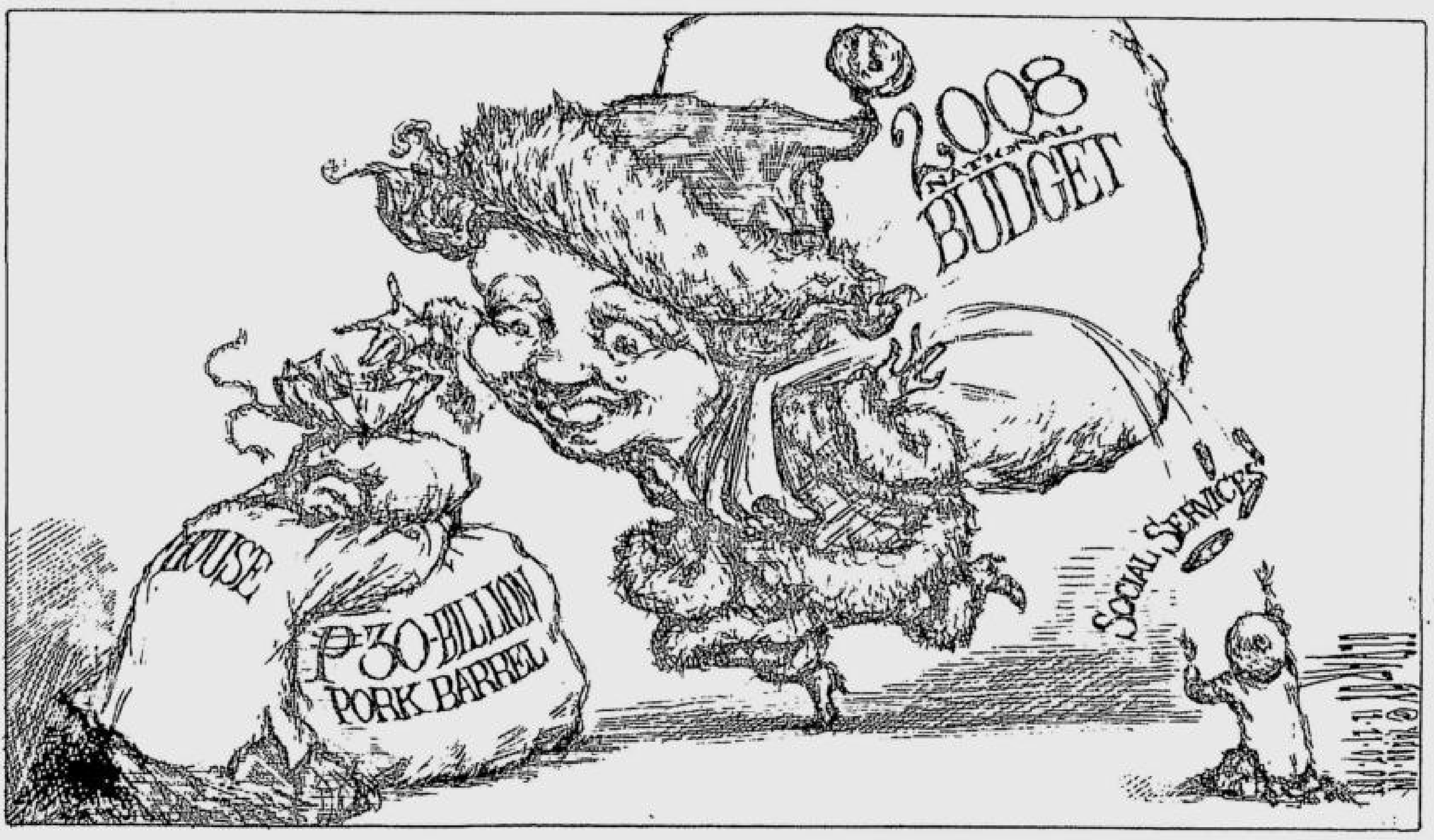


A rescued dog's Christmas poem

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

MALACAÑANG MAKES SUDDEN DECISIONS every day merely to make President Macapagal-Arroyo survive the disappointment, nay, anger of the people. Yesterday, she ordered the release of a number of prisoners aged 70 and above, a couple of days after the scandal over the almost premature (and unauthorized?) release of convicted pedophile former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, an event that infuriated the public. The sudden pardon granted to septuagenarian prisoners is obviously to support the yarn that Jalosjos was being released not because of anything else but because he is nearing 70, and that he was almost released last Dec. 16 because of "an error in computation."

I don't understand the "error in computation" story, unless the prison officials who did it flunked their arithmetic class in grade school. It is very clear that Jalosjos will turn 70 only in 2010, the same year the President has to leave Malacañang and, many people hope, take the place of Jalosjos in Munti.

No, the real reason must have been that Jalosjos was promised early freedom in exchange for his political support in his district during the elections and the convicted rapist expected to collect on this promise. Some officials' heads in the Bureau of Prisons must roll, if not for connivance with Jalosjos, at least for incompetence in arithmetic.

As it has turned out, Jalosjos does not deserve to be released, not now, not in 2010, not even when he turns 70. Executive clemency is granted to prisoners who have shown remorse for their crime, who are contrite, and who have been rehabilitated in prison. The reasons for putting convicts behind bars are: first, so that they will pay their debt to society; second, so that they will not be able to repeat their crime; and third, so they will reform and come out as better members of society.

As Jalosjos has shown by his recent behavior, he has not shown remorse, he is not contrite, he is not sorry for raping that girl, he has not been rehabilitated and he has not reformed. He is still arrogant, claiming he is no longer a prisoner. He even threatened to sue the government if he is not released immediately. What cheek!

* * *

The prisoners we should be sorry for are the animals confined in rescue centers, mostly dogs and cats. They have not committed any crime; it is their owners who have—by not taking care of them and letting them loose and fend for themselves. It is their masters who should be behind bars, not the innocent animals.

These animals would be dead by now if not for animal rescue centers such as the Philippine Animal Rescue Center of the Philippine Animal Welfare Society. PAWS rescues abandoned dogs and cats, rehabilitates and trains them to be good family pets, and offers them for adoption by responsible families. Here's a Christmas poem that may convince you to adopt one:

'Tis the night before Christmas and all through the town,
every shelter is full—we are lost, but not found.
Our numbers are hung on our kennels so bare,
we hope every minute that someone will care.
They'll come to adopt us and give us the call,
"Come here, Max and Sparkie—come fetch your new ball!"
But now we sit here and think of the days
we were treated so fondly—we had cute, baby ways.
Once we were little, then we grew and we grew.
Now we're no longer young and we're no longer new.
So out the back door we were thrown like the trash.
They reacted so quickly—why were they so rash?
We "jump on the children," "don't come when they call,"
we "bark when they leave us," "climb over the wall."
We should have been neutered, we should have been spayed,
now we suffer the consequence of the errors THEY made.
If only they'd trained us, if only we knew,
we'd have done what they asked us and worshiped them, too.
We were left in the backyard, or worse, let to roam.
Now we're tired and lonely and out of a home.
They dropped us off here and they kissed us goodbye...
"Maybe someone else will give you a try."
So now here we are, all confused and alone
in a shelter with others who long for a home.
The kind workers come through with a meal and a pat,
with so many to care for, they can't stay to chat.
They move to the next kennel, giving each of us cheer...
we know that they wonder how long we'll be here.
We lay down to sleep and sweet dreams fill our heads
of a home filled with love and our own cozy beds.
Then we wake to see sad eyes, brimming with tears—
our friends filled with emptiness, worry, and fear.
If you can't adopt us and there's no room at the inn—
could you help with the bills and fill our food bin?
We count on your kindness each day of the year—
can you give more than hope to everyone here?
Please make a donation to pay for the heat...
and help get us something special to eat.
The shelter that cares for us wants us to live,
and more of us will, if more people will give.

—Author Unknown

Dissident thoughts in a Siena monastery

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

WHENEVER I VISIT ITALY AND SEE THE MAGnificent cathedrals and their artwork, I marvel at the sublime expressions of faith that Catholicism has inspired. Believers centuries ago built the soaring *"duomo"* with ancient stones and machines. They carved rocks into exquisite shapes, and in the "Pieta" used cold marble to depict the depth of a mother's sadness over her son's pre-ordained sacrifice. They painted elaborate frescoes on walls and intricate designs on sky-high ceilings. I relived that awe during my recent visit over the past two weeks.

Then I entered a beautiful meeting room in Siena where I would give a lecture, and our host said that some time in the past, in that chamber, they held the trials of the Holy Inquisition. I suddenly imagined the robed elders of my Church torturing heretics into forced confessions. I can now recall that scene from the movie "Goya," where a bishop was asked what was the value of a confession extracted under pain and duress. And the bishop answered: If you were telling the truth, God would help you endure the pain.

How can my religion produce such beautiful art on walls and inflict such monstrosities on humans and their logic? How can it preach the upliftment of the spirit and the denigration of our mortal selves at the same time? How did the minds of our Church leaders reconcile the veneration of the heavens and the degradation of the things of the earth? How could they, when they practiced a religion that sets itself apart from others in that it celebrates The Word Made Flesh, the divine incarnate in human form?

My wife and I spent some days last week in a former Carmelite monastery in Siena, and while these places usually induce me into a contemplative mood, this time instead, amid the tasteful design and architecture, I was provoked into dissident thoughts. What does it mean to be a Catholic in the Third World today? To be more precise, what should a well-fed Catholic do amid the squalor and inhumanity that surround him?

Does it mean that I should mention God's name every 10 seconds? I once asked a colleague: What time is lunch? She said: It's at 12 noon, God willing. I asked: What's on the menu? Answer: *Adobo* and *sinigang*, God willing. Sure, my faith teaches me that everything happens according to His Will, but maybe whether I eat *adobo* or I eat *sinigang*, He prefers to leave for me to choose. I don't imagine God to want to decide everything. In fact, I recall one religion class where I was taught that He gave us free will, and that was the one lesson that I have sort of remembered all these years (after forgetting all the other lessons). Maybe in fact He wants us to take charge of our communities, our planet, and truly "live life in all its fullness."

Does it mean that I should give alms to the beggars knocking on my car window? Sure a few pesos will always help them, but isn't that too cheap a way to salve my conscience? Isn't it just a way for me to feel less guilty that I eat while the children of peasants starve, and that I live in my own home while the children of construction workers are homeless? Indeed, having just stayed in a Carmelite *"chiostre,"* isn't it proof of being socially cloistered that I encounter suffering only at traffic lights and intersections, and that my world is otherwise so neat and orderly?

Is it better to go out and engage in transformative work? Perhaps I should leave the cash-giving to those with oodles of cash, and instead focus on work that I'm better at, like teaching and writing? Yet isn't that the occupational conceit of intellectual workers, that they actually have an impact on the world? Maybe activists are just deluding themselves that they truly make a difference; after all, having first become a student activist more than 30 years ago, what do I have to show for it? Have we improved the human condition one whit? Professors like me fool themselves into thinking that they are "shaping the hearts and minds" of the next generation. Maybe as a UP professor, all I do is just teach lessons, check papers and give grades? That, in its zen-bareness, and nothing more.

These inner contradictions are sharper for those of us in the Third World. Technology has made hunger obsolete. In First World societies, to be obese is a sign of poverty, yet hereabouts, it is a sign of prosperity and upward mobility. Filipinos starve not because we lack food but because wealth is not distributed fairly.

For me, the most glaring embodiment of the Third World dilemma is the gym. Yes, those hi-tech cathedrals of physical workouts. Get this: In a country where children beg at night under the rain and rejoice if you give them P10, where some students skip meals just to get through the day or skip class altogether on days when there is not enough *baon*—in such a country, there are people who pay a thousand or two each month in membership dues to sweat in air-conditioned rooms and use up electricity to run on treadmills—and then ride cars to go to and from the gym.

Sure, I understand. Tropical weather makes gyms convenient if not necessary. What I wonder about is how comfortable we are with that fact, how casually we can talk about First World luxuries while Third World realities lurk just a few meters away. The fault lies in the way we have organized ourselves, and the way we have come to accept a condition with extremes of wealth and poverty.

I do not mean to ruin your Christmas mood by reminding you of those who have little to cheer about this season, lest I behave like those medieval clerics who thought that being a spoilsport was the way of the divine. In the spirit of the season I recall the words of Max Ehrmann's "Desiderata": "With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy."

Illiberal response to terrorism

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

IN SUPPORT OF THE CALL TO REVIVE THE ANti-subversion Law (RA 1700), President Macapagal-Arroyo tried to update the 50-year-old legislation by putting it in the context of war on terrorism. She brushed up the law as a weapon to end the 39-year communist insurgency. She branded the armed communists as "terrorists" who are "a threat to the sovereignty of the nation and must be checked once and for all."

Following the repeal of RA 1700, the successor legislation (RA 7636) legalized the Communist Party of the Philippines and its affiliate organizations, opening up the political system for their participation in electoral democracy.

The President framed the proposed revival of RA 1700 in the terrorist context to make it appear that it has moved past the shadows of the Cold War. The war on terrorism is an upshot of the 9/11 terrorist bombing of the New York World Trade Center. The response of democratic societies to the threat of terrorism has been to restrict political liberties, which are the cornerstone of liberal democratic societies.

At the writers' festival in Melbourne last Aug. 31, the Age newspaper published an edited extract from the recent book of A.C. Grayling, professor of philosophy at Birbeck, University of London, titled "The Story of the Struggles for Liberty and Rights that Made the Modern West." Grayling was guest at the festival.

Grayling's new book warns against the illiberal response of democracies to the terrorist attacks blamed on Islamic terrorists. He points out that during the Cold War, when the threat that faced liberal polities consisted of attacks by enemy armies, "the reaction was to have soldiers and nuclear weapons and fighter aircraft ready in return; it was reasonably clear where lay the line in the sand that the enemy must not step over." That threat and that "kind of preparedness were too familiar . . . it was for this the world made its preparations and, having done so, achieved a certain comfort and stability behind the ensuing armoured lines."

"Terrorism is wholly different," he says. "It is insidious, secret, unpredictable, treacherous; it comes as much from within a given society as from outside it; it targets unsuspecting innocents in the course of their daily lives. It is crime on a monstrous scale, aiming at nothing less than mass murder and wholesale disruption of social and economic life.

"Moreover, its association with strongly held religious belief complicates matters vastly, because whereas liberal societies are painfully anxious to respect the sensitivities of religious minorities, to show them a maximum of friendly and concessive tolerance, and thus to give them all the freedom they need to exist and flourish in their own ways, those very freedoms allow the religious minorities to breed among themselves ... the paradoxical enemies of the freedom and tolerance that permit them to arise."

The book continues: "Perhaps, worse still is what liberal societies may do to themselves in the face of this new threat. They begin, by small but dangerous increments, to cease to be as liberal as they once were. They begin to restrict their hard-won rights and freedoms as a protection against the criminal minority who attempts (and as we thus see, by forcing liberty to commit suicide, succeed in doing so) to terrorize society.

"In a curious way, liberalism's efforts to restrict its own liberties are made according to the liberal principle that no minority must be singled out. Thus, even if it were known that all would-be terrorists sprang from a small group within a small minority in society, it would be illiberal to impose restrictions just on them to protect the rest of society, on the grounds that this would be unfair and discriminatory. As a result, society as a whole is brought under the liberty-restricting regime.

"In the US, the Orwellianly named Patriot Act and, in Britain, moves to introduce identity cards, to restrict freedom of speech, to limit immigration and to introduce longer periods of imprisonment without trial are among the liberty-undermining measures that these states—both in the vanguard of the free world—have introduced in response to perceived terrorist threat.

"When in 1940 Britain faced the imminence of invasion ... its government enacted some temporary security measures—temporarily, note—such as identity cards and restrictions on the freedom of speech and the press.

"Now, in the face of a far lesser threat, the greatest among the Western liberal democracies are enacting permanent legislation of an even more draconian kind.

"[It is] eminently worth reminding ... that the rights and liberties that have made every ordinary Western citizen the equal of a 16th-century aristocrat were very, very hard won.

"The point I urge is that all the efforts towards securing the rights and freedoms we enjoy (still enjoy, almost, although they are beginning to fray and diminish) cost blood and took centuries. It dishonors those who fought for them to forget that fact, and it does us no credit to be careless of what was thus won. My hope is that understanding what it cost—seeing our past five centuries as a continuously unfolding series of struggles to make ourselves free, to make us lords of ourselves—will summon the resolve not to allow the erosion of our liberties in the spurious name of security, for as Benjamin Franklin said, 'He who would put security before liberty deserves neither.'"

Lanterns and a dancing 'Oble'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"IS THIS YOUR FIRST AND LAST LANTERN PArade, too?" asked Amina Rasul when we chanced upon each other at UP Diliman's Quezon Hall. Amina was with her mother, Sen. Santanina Rasul, and it was still some hours before the parade was to begin.

I decided to stay and watch the parade not only because, after bringing my daughter Miya to UP, the traffic would have left me with little time to shop in the malls, but also because this is her last year in UP, and she would no longer have a reason to brave the crowds for this annual tradition. I had heard her stories about the Lantern Parade through the years (and her extreme disappointment when it was suddenly "cancelled" last year), and had wondered what all the fuss was about, not having studied in UP in my undergraduate years. At least I had this excuse. Amina is a UP graduate and she laughingly conceded, "I don't know why it never occurred to me to watch the Lantern Parade while I was studying here!"

So there we were, two Lantern Parade "virgins," positioning ourselves on plastic chairs as the tiers slowly filled with students, faculty, alumni and families. Miya found her friends among the early comers and they busied themselves playing Frisbee as we waited for the Parade to begin.

The Parade was heralded by a brass band and the march of university officials, led by UP Diliman chancellor Sergio Cao. (UP president Emerlinda Roman arrived midway through the Parade.) The first entries, representing different colleges and organizations, seemed rather tame and safe, belying UP's reputation for edgy, daring aesthetics. About the most memorable was the dance number from the College of Library Science and Information Services, with the teachers posing as the "briefcase girls" of a popular game show, though they held books in place of briefcases.

* * *

AS the sky darkened, the stakes grew higher, the *parols* got bigger and more intricate. There were many references to "Oble," the UP community's fond nickname for the Oblation that has become the university's symbol.

One homage had a multi-colored Oble surrounded by 100 tiny parols, in celebration of UP's centennial next year. Another lantern simply had the number 100 arranged around a rendering of the college's vision of the future. The College of Architecture had, expectedly, a scale-model of a futuristic building representing the university's past, present and future.

Highly anticipated was the entry of the College of Human Kinetics, which opened with a parade of athletes, many of them wearing medals and bearing trophies won in various competitions. Indeed, their *parol* took the form of a giant gold medal.

But even more anticipated was the UP Pep Squad, which won back first place honors at the UAAP cheerdance competition this year. Breathtaking indeed was the performance, with cheer dancers tossed high in the air or held aloft by their teammates, and so palpable was the energy that you could feel it in waves even high up in our seats.

In contrast to all that energy was the quiet dignity of the lanterns of the Asian Center, which bore touches of our Asian neighbors, from a lantern in the shape of a minaret, and another with the distinct Indonesian roof line.

* * *

EVERY year, so I'm told, the most exciting part of the Parade are the entries of the College of Fine Arts, which has been elevated to the status of "Hall of Famer" because it had romped away with the prizes with such regularity it was decided they needed to be out of the competition to give other colleges and organizations a chance.

But not even the prospect of going winless could dampen the creativity and ingenuity of the artists, with the college deciding this year to pay homage to the National Artists among their alumni. Starting with a tribute to Guillermo Tolentino, the parade opened with, of course, Oble, in dazzling white resin with a fig leaf that flapped open and shut. Among the notable "lanterns": a living tableau of a Manansala painting of a Manila slum; another tableau of an Amorsolo rural scene, suddenly coming to life to the tune of the "Papaya Song"; a glowing multi-colored blow-up of Arturo Luz's musicians with a group of dancers in the artist's signature black-and-white; sculptor Napoleon Abueva aboard a horse-drawn cart, with a model of the UP chapel opening and displaying Abueva's dual-faceted Christ sculpture; and BenCab blown up and shown riding a giant yellow VW Beetle.

But the highlight of the parade was a "rock mountain" accompanied by a parade of miniature "Ikot" jeeps, another UP icon. Slowly, the mountain opened and closed to reveal representations of UP rivals until the last—a "cute" dancing Oble—mascot of the university's centennial.

* * *

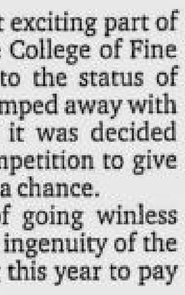
EARLIER, UP's "*tibak*" contingent was represented by the student party Stand UP, which had a living Nativity tableau in a nipa hut along with red banners and streamers denouncing the increased tuition and other fees and the approved UP Charter.

Just before the spectacular fireworks began, the red banners could be seen inching into the performance space, but everyone had by then turned their attention to the show high up in the dark sky.

As the fireworks ended and most of the audience stood to leave, there was a brief commotion, and observers later reported that the activists had sought to grab hold of the mike but were thwarted when authorities cut off the sound system.

My daughter and her friends merely shrugged off the incident, and clearly the brief scuffle, as well as the injection of "serious" issues into the annual "feel-good" exercise was taken as par for the course. That's UP for you, I thought, unpredictable and never dull.

An American woman's happiest Christmas



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

WHEN I SAW THE THICK BOUND VOLUME OF an obscure magazine called The Philippines Gossip, my eyes lit up. All the issues for 1907 were complete, and though the gossip was stale, being a century old, I presumed there was much of interest to be found inside.

I was sorely disappointed because it was full of advertisements better left to an economic or social historian. What little "gossip" was there concerned Americans who had just arrived in Manila: who was leaving for the United States, who was ill, recovering, dying, or dead. I turned to the December issues and found pages filled with pictures taken by the infamous Commissioner Dean Worcester: actually ethnographic documentation of the peoples who were then distinguished from the "low-land Christian" population of the Philippines and placed under a "Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes." These pictures showed life in the Cordilleras a century ago, but there was neither text nor article to go with all of them.

Patience is bitter, as the late Doy Laurel used to tell me, but its fruit is sweet. So I plodded on and found a first-hand experience of Christmas in the Philippines from an anonymous American lady who had accompanied her husband to the Philippines at the turn of the last century. No details were given and we presume, from the cheerfulness of the author, that the couple was here shortly after the declaration of independence in 1898 and the quiet following the outbreak of the Filipino-American War in 1899. Or maybe all these warm memories came from the fact that her husband survived the fighting and was even considered some sort of hero in the community. Nevertheless the account of their makeshift Christmas décor and dinner in 1900 is worth reading today as people rush about to prepare gifts and food for the coming noche buena:

"My first Christmas in the Philippines was perhaps the happiest one spent since childhood. It was during the 'Days of Empire' when my husband was detailed on court-martial duty in Manila and life was a continuous round of pleasure.

"On our return on Christmas Eve from the usual Luneta drive, in which everyone participated in those days, my husband seemed perplexed and seriously preoccupied with his thoughts. After dinner he requested me to remain in the dining room for a little while. In about half an hour, he returned with a radiant face and escorted me into our living room, where, to my utter amazement stood a Christmas tree.

"Such an amazingly festive tree is beyond imagination! A tall palm had been selected and lighted with carriage candies, cut in halves and secured to the leaves by their grease. Apples, oranges, and chocolate bonbons gaily decorated the tree, amid numerous mysterious packages bearing my name.

"The effect was delightfully harmonious with the surroundings. The low-ceilinged room, white washed and decorated fancifully in red, blue, yellow, pink and terracotta, with bolos forming a frieze; tiny squares of shell in the windows; the bamboo floor covered with an Oriental rug; my cozy corner hung with a gay tapestry and draped with a huge fish net made for me by my husband, with trophies of hikes in its meshes, were all entrancing in the glow of the Christmas candles."

One can only imagine the scene. They had just come from the afternoon carriage ride in the Luneta where a military band played music in the early evening and people came to stroll, ride, or just go round and round the *paseo* while there was music. After that was dinner at home, but today the husband took the effort of setting up a Christmas tree. After this delightful surprise, they went out again to attend a Christmas party at the Oriente Hotel, but decided to have their Christmas dinner back in their home:

"How much we enjoyed the delicacies none can guess except those who have lived on: beans, tinned soup, salmon and corned beef (that dreadful Army corned beef that killed my dog, which had journeyed from Alaska to these faraway islands) and occasionally chicken for about a year.

"Having been in Manila but a short time from the provinces, we had not succeeded in procuring an American stove from the Quartermasters Department, the only place from which they could be obtained in those far off days, so our Chino cook 'roasted' the turkey on a native stove, after much persuasion, and it was delicious. The turkey was placed in a large pan covered with a smaller one and on top of this coals were kept. Our dinner was a success in every sense. The potatoes were roasted on coals, then removed from the skins, nicely seasoned and mashed.

"The unique feature which is necessary for the success of every dinner was my mince meat dumplings, which were greatly enjoyed. It being impossible to have pie, as we had no oven, dumplings were the only recourse for making use of the quantity of mince meat sent in the Christmas box. Lee, our cook, devised an oven from a tin cracker box later on, and supplied us with turnovers, tarts, etc. but the filling was always mince meat or prunes. No amount of persuasion would induce him to use the various tinned fruits."

This was how expatriate Americans dealt with Christmas in a foreign land. Surely today, expatriate Filipinos try to create a sense of warmth and home at Christmas. No turkey and mince meat for them though—ham, *queso de bola*, and *lechon* will do.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Happy holidays

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THAT'S THE POLITICALLY CORRECT WAY THESE DAYS OF greeting people in December, to make sure non-Christians don't feel excluded.

Why "happy" though, I've wondered, rather than "merry" as in "Merry Christmas"? Maybe it's the repetition of the letter "h", but then if it's alliteration we're after, why didn't we come up with a greeting like "Cheery Christmas"?

There's something about Christmas cheer though, with its, well, merry qualities, what with ho-ho-ho Santa Claus and perk-me-up music. In China I'd hear 'Jingle Bells" going off as a ringtone, sometimes in the middle of a hot summer. No wonder many non-Christian countries have adopted Christmas as a year-end event.

The commercialism around Christmas feeds on the cheer—and a promise of happiness. The explosion of advertisements all boil down to one message: celebrate Christmas by buying this for someone, or even for yourself, and happiness will be yours.

Deep down we all know that isn't true, but we go ahead anyway with the mad buying. It's partly a matter of social obligation, but let's face it, there's also a physiological high involved, a "good" feeling when we're shopping. But to sustain that feeling, we have to buy more, or get more gifts, and then it happens: the happiness wears down like toys running out of batteries.

Surveys

Christmas has become part of a larger happiness industry involving not just manufacturers and distributors of consumer products but also "positive psychologists" who teach "happiness skills," a new generation of religious leaders like Rick Warren, emphasizing "purpose-driven" lives, and even social scientists who do happiness surveys.

The happiness surveys are interesting. We Filipinos love them because we tend to do well there, a welcome respite from our more dubious achievements in areas like the Corruption Perception Index. I don't know how many times I've read or heard claims that we're the happiest people in the world. If that makes us happy, so be it.

I did some research and found our rank actually varies from one survey to another. This is because the happiness surveys have different ways of defining and measuring happiness.

Let's look at two surveys as examples. There's the Happy Planet Index (I'm not joking, that's what the survey is called), combining three measures: the ecological footprint (how much we consume energy), life satisfaction and life expectancy. It's an odd combination of sorts, with the very subjective variable of life satisfaction integrated with two objective ones. Life expectancy is actually an outcome indicator, presuming that the happier a country is, the longer the life expectancy.

On that Happy Planet Index, the South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu was No. 1, followed, interestingly enough, by nine Latin American countries: Colombia (yes, with its drug-related violence), Costa Rica, Dominica, Panama, Cuba, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and St. Vincent. The Philippines, which I often describe as a Latin American country that ended up on the wrong side of the Pacific Ocean, was 17th. No, we're not the happiest people in Asia: we trailed behind Vietnam and Bhutan.

Prof. Ruut Veenhoven of the Erasmus University in Rotterdam has compiled a World Database of Happiness, which is much more extensive, combining different happiness and "subjective well-being" (that's the preferred academic term) surveys across the years, across the world. In that database, we ranked 40th to 43rd, tied with three other countries. On top of the list for this world database were Denmark, Switzerland, Austria, Iceland and Finland. Again, in Asia, we weren't the leaders: Singapore and Indonesia did better than us, while China and Vietnam were quite close to our ranks.

Three parts

Expect more happiness surveys and research in the future, as social scientists look for ways to unlock the secrets to happiness. BBC's talk show "Hardtalk" featured, this week, an interview with one of these researchers. Martin Seligman, former president of the American Psychologist Association who is known for having developed "positive psychology" and author of "Authentic Happiness," explains that psychologists (and psychiatrists) are known for dealing with misery but in his own practice, he realized that helping people to overcome sadness did not necessarily mean happiness.

The skills for overcoming sadness are different from those for happiness, Seligman found, because happiness has three components: positive emotions, engagement and meaning in life. The positive emotions part is the good cheer and the smiling. He admits Americans are good with that; I imagined the back-slapping congeniality ("That's great!," "That's wonderful!") of my American friends and then thought of our own Filipino exuberance, captured in the word "*masaya*." So maybe yes, in a way, we are a happy people, but Seligman warns that you can achieve this kind of happiness with "savoring tricks," getting a quick high that fades rapidly—a bit like what we do collectively every Christmas.

Seligman says we need the two to build up two other components of happiness. "Engagement" is being able to be so wrapped up in what we do so that, and I'm paraphrasing here, "nothing else matters." The way Seligman puts it, when you're thoroughly engaged, and someone asks you what are you thinking of, you'd answer, "Nothing." I was struck by that part because of its parallels to what Zen teaches: when you're so mindfully aware of what you're doing, you're actually not thinking of anything, not craving or wanting anything else.

The third component of happiness is meaning, or purpose in life, and Seligman says this is where some skills may need to be imparted. The "Hardtalk" interviewer, Stephen Sacker, is quite a cynic and he peppered Seligman with other questions around this point about skills-building: Isn't all this "psycho-babble"? Are we making our young emotionally obsessive? Is happiness compatible with ruthless capitalism?

I was impressed with the way Seligman kept his cool, citing study after study to prove his point. He says that sure, you may not need psychologists and schools to teach happiness, but it isn't right to expect people, especially the young, to just keep "muddling along" until they find their way.

I couldn't agree more with Seligman. Times have changed, and happiness has become more elusive, even as we see greater material wealth. His interview also got me thinking about how we Filipinos look at happiness. When we wish each other "*Maligayang Pasko*," do we mean "Happy Christmas"? Why doesn't "*Masayang Pasko*" sound right, while "Merry Christmas" does? Maybe we do know the secrets to happiness, but just need to get the right blend of the three ingredients. Maybe.

Happy holidays?

Happy holidays.

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Moral dimension of revolutions

THE INQUIRER i-TEAM'S THREE-part series on "The Activist Court" (which started on Oct. 31) referred to the Supreme Court which has been "flexing its muscles" on extrajudicial killings. Anyway, one feature was on "Chief Justice Puno: An unlikely revolutionary," by Fernando del Mundo.

"Unlikely," according to the report, because Reynato Puno was part of the solicitor general's panel which defended certain dictatorial acts of Marcos. Another reason was that a communist New People's Army guerrilla shot and killed Puno's brother, Judge Isaac Puno Jr., in front of his family inside a restaurant in 1977.

The report mentioned that Puno was a graduate of the UP College of Law. But it did not mention that he was once editor in chief of the Philippine Collegian, official student publication of UP, a perennial hotbed of Philippine student activism; he got his Master of Laws degree from the University of California at Berkeley (once a hotbed of American student activism) in 1968, a signal year for global "Student Power." These are clues that the incumbent Chief Justice may have once been a student activist.

One documentary evidence of this, which I came across while researching, is an old issue (July-August 1964) of Progressive Review, an activist journal of those times. It contains an article by Puno on the "The Anti-Subversion Law—A Bill of Attainder" and, therefore, unconstitutional. His ending paragraph is worth quoting here:

"Sad to state, RA 1700 is a hollow if not pretentious display of ardor for our democratic liberties. In our overzealous attempt to dedicate ourselves to the virtues of democracy, we unwittingly disclose our lack of faith in freedom itself. The Anti-Subversion Law is a monument to our lack of confidence in the essential strength of democracy, a posture borne out of inexperience in the art of government, or ignorance corrupted by arrogance."

More than those progressive words was the progressive company that Puno shared in the staff box of Progressive Review then. Let us name some of them: Jose Ma. Sison, Francisco Nemenzo Jr., Luis V. Teodoro Jr., Petronilo Bn. Daroy, Gelacio Y. Guillermo Jr., Vivencio Jose, Jose David Lapuz, Saturnino C. Ocampo, Emmanuel Osorio, Wilfredo Pascua Sanchez, Perfecto Tera Jr., Edberto Villegas and Julieta L. Sison. How likely or unlikely is one to become a revolutionary with that company?

You might be surprised by what deeper research on that question will show. Anyway, in Puno's case, an INQUIRER story last Dec. 3 reported his call for "servant leaders" to spearhead a moral revolution. Puno said that this is the kind of leadership that would "bring about the correct transformation of society." Transformation of society is as close as one can get to the notion of revolution.

But the failure of many revolutions—whether political, social or cultural—only underscores the moral of the story, which is the lesson of their lack of moral dimension. To be truly revolutionary, therefore, means to be moral first and foremost. Puno is on the right—if not also the left—track.

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Mystery shrouds 'NLEX' right of way

MY CLIENT'S CASE MAY NOT INvolve as large an estate as the Maysilo, which is often a subject of Neal Cruz in his columns. But it is neither a case to be sneezed at because of the amount involved. Here's my client's case:

My client represents one of the heirs of Irene Bustamante who died intestate and without any child on Dec. 6, 1965. But she left a fairly vast estate, one of which is a 4,990-square meter lot in Valenzuela and registered as TCT No. 73548. Three years ago my client received a letter from the Valenzuela Treasurer's Office, asking the heirs to pay the realty tax on the lot which had been in arrears for sometime. My client complied and paid the tax arrears.

In order to update the record of that parcel of land, my client engaged the services of a geodetic engineer. My client was shocked, to say it mildly, to learn that the sketch/plan drawn by the surveyor contained a certification to the effect that the lot was already covered by the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX).

My client's reaction was understandable considering that she never was served any notice by NLEX or by any other person or entity to inform her that the parcel of land would be used or expropriated as part of the NLEX. We wrote the NLEX but it has not replied. We also wrote the Department of Public Works and Highways and it came back with the note that it "has no record on file regarding the above-mentioned property being affected by the right of way project of this office."

Now, we are being tossed around from one office to another, but up to now the puzzle has not been solved. We hope that with this letter, some agency or entity will be able to shed light on this mystery, and my client will finally find the solution she has been frantically looking for.

—FERNANDO B. DUQUE,
Fbduque2004@yahoo.com

Wrong interpretation of court's decision

THIS IS TO CORRECT SEVERAL GLARING errors in the news item titled "Philcomsat board election questioned." (INQUIRER, 11/26/07) This is the second time that Daxim L. Lucas has made an inaccurate report about the Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp./Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (POTC/Philcomsat); the first was in the article "Appeals hands win to Locsin-Poblador bloc in Philcomsat" (INQUIRER, 10/20/07) about which we have already complained to the editor. Our letter was published on Nov. 12.

On Nov. 24, Lucas contacted me regarding that very same issue, and yet he continues to make false and damaging misrepresentations. Lucas' Nov. 26 article referred once again to the Court of Appeals decision penned by Justice Martin Villarama. Lucas admitted to me that indeed he had in his possession a "press release from the other side" along with a copy of the decision. Lucas also admitted that the Villarama decision in no way comports with the conclusions of his second article. Since Lucas' articles are based neither on facts (like the Court of Appeals decision), nor on evenhanded reporting, but are merely a disguise for the press release from a disgruntled and discredited side, we question his decision to repeatedly misrepresent facts, this after numerous corrections. Should Lucas check his facts elsewhere, there are plenty of other legitimate and accurate sources.

It is incomprehensible how a diligent journalist could interpret this as a "victory" for a group of individuals: (a) who have no ownership stake in the companies they "sit on the boards of"; (b) whose supposed governmental support has been withdrawn; (c) where the government proxy issued by POTC defunct shareholders, IRC and Mid-Pasig, was a bogus one—as these governmental shareholders of record had ceased to exist in 2000, or two years before the proxy holder—Enrique Locsin—was nominated by the government; and (d) when the discredited government directors had been supplanted with the recent appointment of new government nominees. Furthermore, contrary to the victorious claims of the "Locsin-Poblador group," the Court of Appeals resolution could not have upheld the "Locsin-Poblador group" as the "legitimate board of POTC and Philcomsat" since there was no such "Locsin-Poblador group" in existence at the time the case was filed.

—LIN I. BILDNER,
president, CEO,
Philippine Communications
Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat),
Telecoms Plaza Bldg.,
316 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City

The articles referred to were based on statements from a rival group. Opposing camps almost always have different interpretations of the same issues. As much as possible, I try to present the sides of both parties in the same story, or if this is difficult to do due to the time constraints of the news cycle, to report the other side immediately thereafter.

After the stories in question came out, I have since filed two others highlighting the initiatives of private shareholders, based on the statements and documents provided by their representatives.

—DAXIM L. LUCAS,
reporter, Inquirer

There is no such thing as freedom of the press

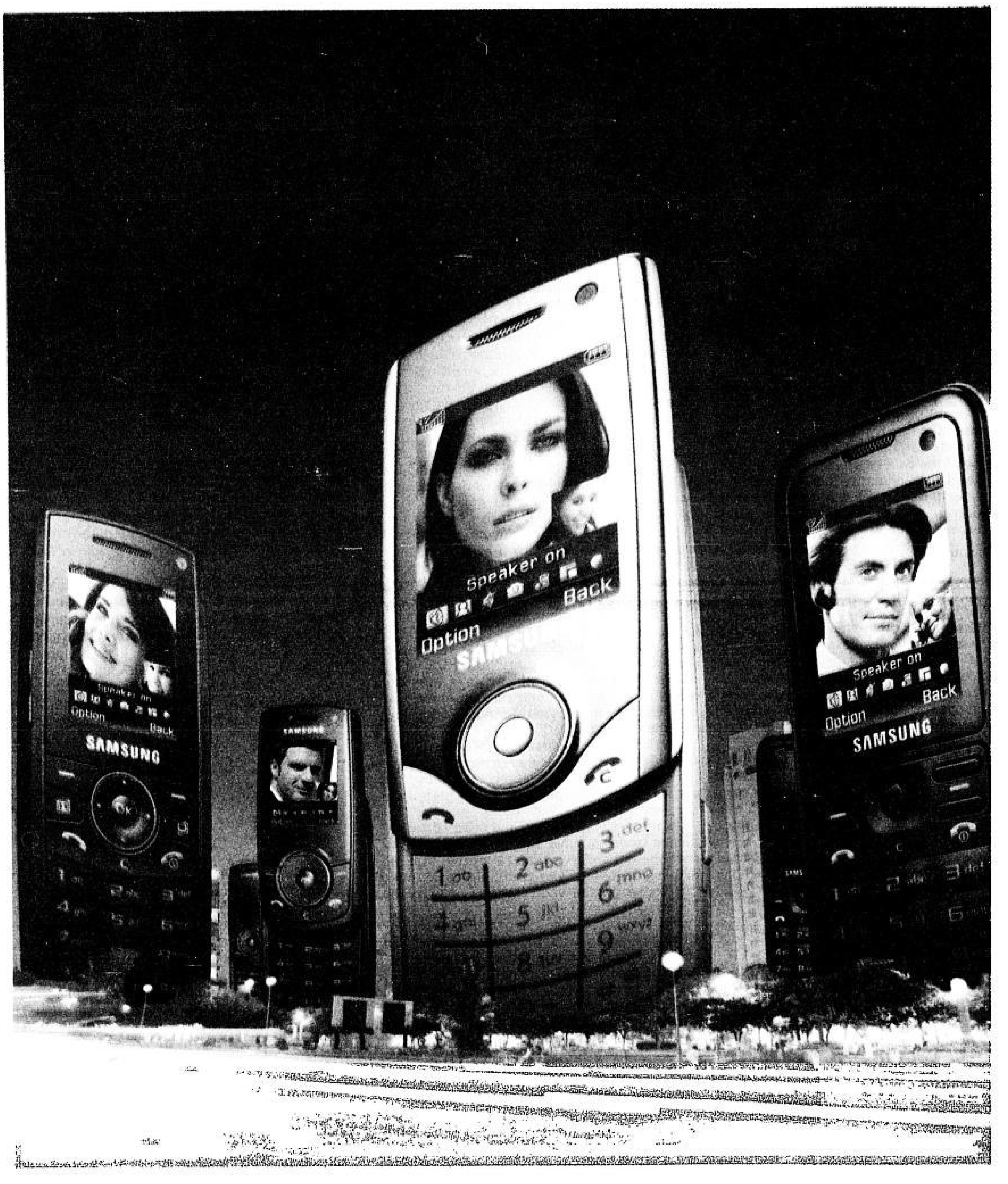
I READ ABOUT SEN. MANUEL ROXAS II's plan to call for a Senate investigation into the arrest of media people after the incident at the Peninsula Manila Hotel last Nov. 29. (INQUIRER, 12/03/07) I can't understand why so much resources will again have to be squandered for an insignificant event—resources that can be used to help the poor.

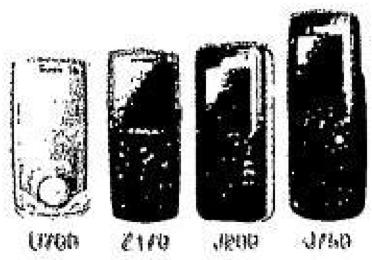
So what if media people were arrested? Perhaps, they deserved it. All this talk about press freedom is a lot of bull. There is no such thing—press freedom is the freedom to print and broadcast only what the media owners want to—and this explains the heavy bias and obvious slants of ABS-CBN (TFC here in the United States).

Media is one of the most corrupt institutions of societies. And it has a history of abusing and going overboard and then it takes cover behind the cloak of this "press freedom" bull. And here is Roxas trying to gain extra media mileage through a Senate investigation, *kuno*! That's obviously for his presidential plans.

Whew! I wish the next time Antonio Trillanes IV attempts a coup, he does it in the Senate.

—JUANITO LAKARIN JR.,
jlnewyorkcity@hotmail.com





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1,800 families flee Basilan clashes

ZAMBOANGA CITY—AT LEAST 1,800 FAMILIES in Basilan fled their homes as a result of clashes between government security forces and Moro gunmen since Tuesday, officials said.

Unkaya Pukan Mayor Joel Maturan told the INQUIRER that in his town alone, more than 900 families from the villages of Bohe Suyak, Sungkayot and Tongbato were displaced by the fighting.

The military said the violence flared up anew after soldiers conducting antiterror operation stumbled on Abu Sayyaf gunmen.

The military also reported that the Abu Sayyaf was being reinforced by some members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Since Tuesday, at least two soldiers and six Moro gunmen have already died in the clashes, according to Maj. Gen. Nelson Allaga, chief of the military's Western Mindanao Command here.

Maturan said the clashes occurred as residents were preparing for Wednesday's celebration of the Eid'l Adha.

The celebration is one of the most important events among Muslims. Eid'l Adha, or the feast of sacrifice, is an annual celebration commemorating Prophet Abraham's will to sacrifice his son, Ismael, in honor of God.

"There was no more room for celebration. Instead of cooking for the festivity, people left their homes because of fear of being caught in the crossfire," he said.

In Tipo-tipo Central, three villages were also affected by the fighting.

Mayor Tong Istarul said about 900 families were also displaced from the three villages.

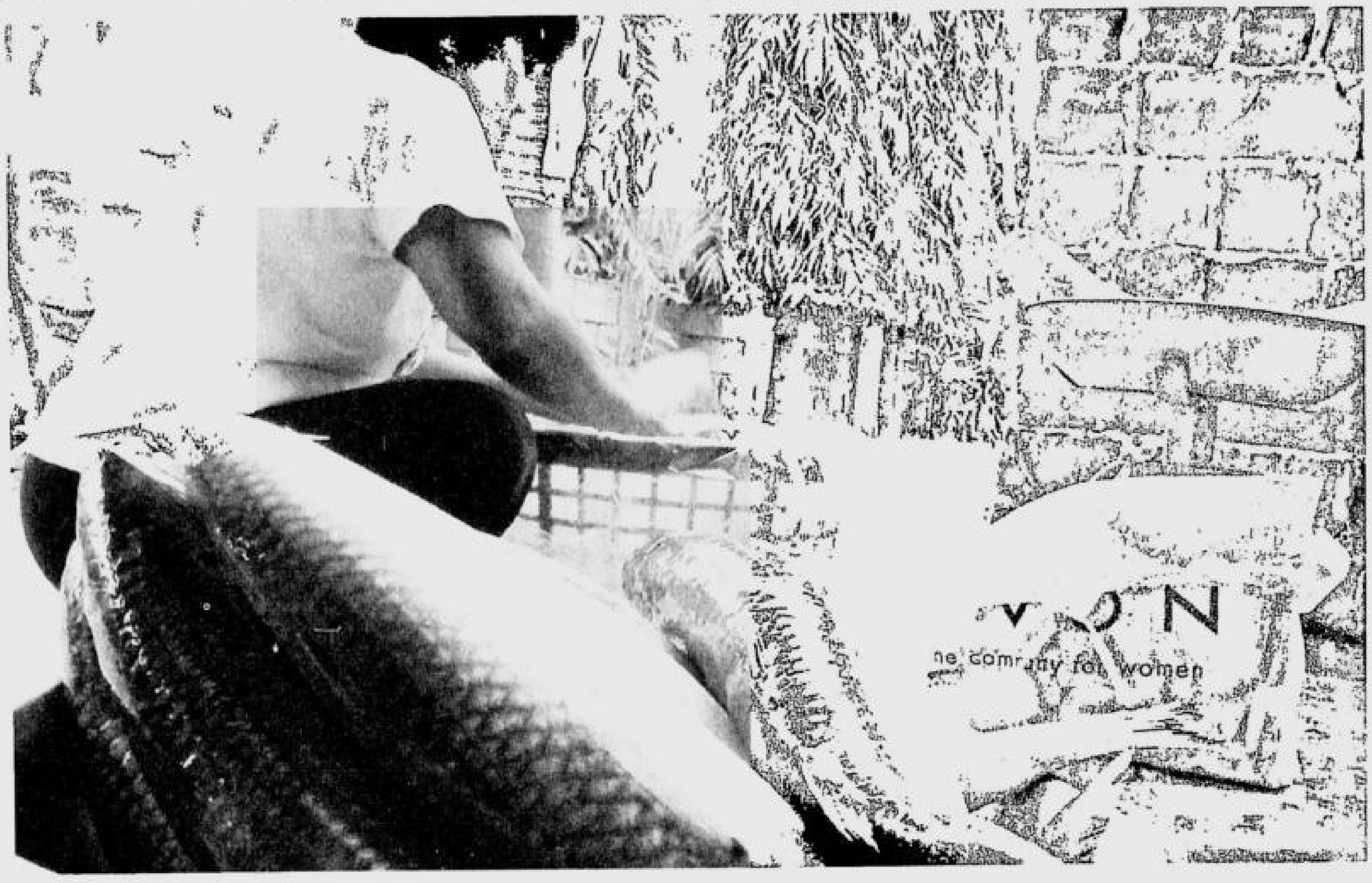
He said what complicated the situation was the use of heavy artillery by Marines since Tuesday afternoon.

"I pity our people so much. They have not recovered from previous violence yet and here comes another again. What really made us sad is that these incidents occurred when we were supposed to be celebrating," Istarul said.

Meanwhile, Istarul said that some of those killed in the violence were actually civilians and not Abu Sayyaf gunmen as the military had claimed.

"They returned to the area hoping to salvage something for our Eid'l Adha celebration but they were executed by the military forces, do they know that one of them is a son of an Army soldier?" he said.

Maj. Eugene Batara, spokesperson of the military's Western Mindanao Command, said they did not receive any report about civilians killed in the clashes. *Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*



PRICEY CATCH

VILLAMOR VISAYA JR./INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

A woman sells "ludong" (a rare and delicious variety of freshwater fish) and "banag" (a family of fish similar to ludong) to a buyer in Alibagu, Ilagan, Isabela. Her husband, a fisherman, labors his way off cold waters to catch fish almost everyday during good weather to earn money for the family. Ludong is so rare it could sell for up to P3,500 per kg.

Cop in fatal road mishap kills self in jail

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—AN INSTRUCTOR of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) shot himself inside a police station hours after the van he was driving accidentally bumped and killed a high school student in Sta. Rosa City on Thursday.

PO3 Willicito Bayan, 41, resident of Barangay Tartaria, Silang, Cavite, died from a gunshot wound in the head while being rushed to the South Luzon Hospital.

Chief Insp. Marvin Saro, chief of the Laguna Police Protection and Assistance Group (Lippag), said they held Bayan after the Mitsubishi L300 van (PMF 814) he was driving hit student Jayson Andaya, 16, who was then crossing the street in Barangay Don Jose at around 9:15 p.m. Wednesday.

Saro said Bayan was then on his way to the PNPA campus in Silang town where he worked as a firing range instructor.

The accident happened just a few meters away from the office of Lippag.

Saro said Bayan immediately rushed the high school student to a nearby hospital but the student was declared dead on arrival by doctors.

"As part of our standard operation procedure, we arrested Bayan and detained him at the temporary detention cell inside our office," Saro said in a mobile phone interview.

Saro said that at around 6 a.m. Thursday, Bayan's younger brother, PO1 Antonio Bayan Jr., visited him at the jail and inquired about what happened.

"After a few minutes, we heard (Antonio) saying, 'Please, don't do that.' Then, a gunshot rang out," he said.

Saro said it turned out that while the two were talking, Bayan suddenly grabbed the 9 mm caliber pistol of his brother, put it in his head and pulled the trigger. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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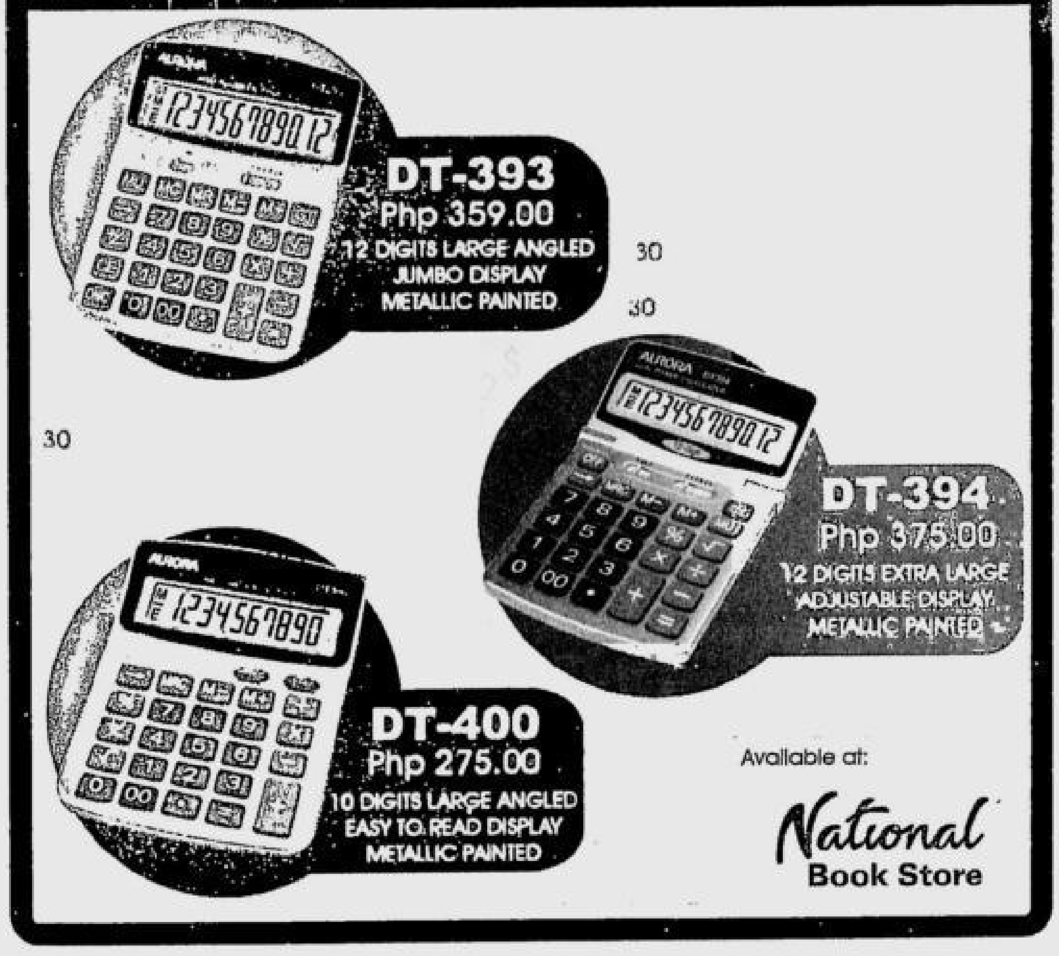

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New Bo Sanchez Book Tackles Addictions

Following the success of his recently released books, *8 Secrets of the Truly Rich* and *How To Find Your One True Love*, Bo Sanchez, known as the Preacher in Blue Jeans, has come out with another book set to be another bestseller.

The new book, titled *7 Secrets to Real Freedom*, provides practical, life-changing ways to deal with addictions.

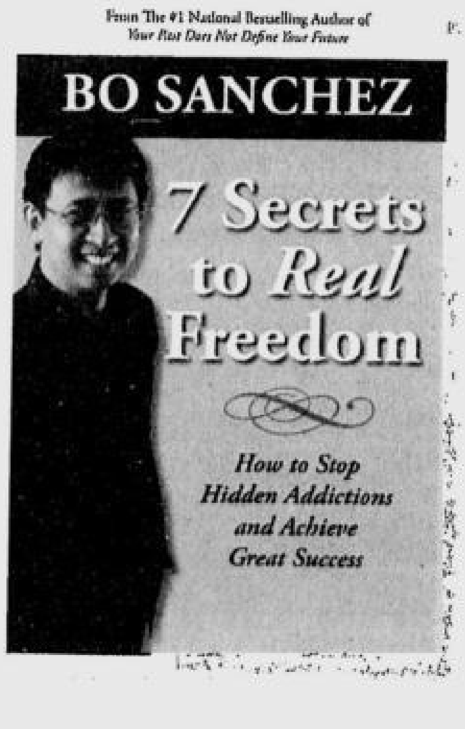
The tips Sanchez offers in the book are based on his own experience when at one time before he became a popular preacher, he became a porn addict and an approval addict.

Sanchez, who at 12 years old was prophesied that he would speak about God to thousands, is the founder of the Light of Jesus Ministries and the Shepherd's Voice Publications Inc. which publishes Sanchez's books, and *Kerygma*, an inspirational Catholic magazine. He is a much-sought after lay preacher in the Philippines and abroad.

In his new book, Sanchez shares the steps he took to deal with his addictions and his path to healing that enabled him to fulfill his mandate to preach the Gospel to thousands.

Sanchez reveals the seven powerful secrets that can set addicts free – and give them the power to reclaim their life and fulfill their dreams.

7 Secrets to Real Freedom is now available at the National Book Store For details call 411-7876 to 77, 725-9999 or log on to **www.bosanchez.ph.**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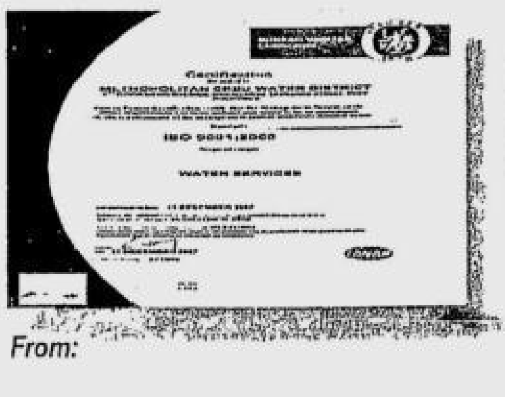

On December 12, 2003, Bureau Veritas also certified MCWD as ISO 9001:1994 compliant making MCWD as the first water district in the country compliant to ISO 9001 standards.

The certificate was given on December 11, 2007, MCWD Social Hall, Cebu City, Philippines.

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Mayor taunts NBI on custody battle

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

PULUPANDAN, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL—"They can search the nation. We're out of the country."

This was the reaction of Pulupandan Mayor Magdaleno Peña to the search on Thursday for his 3-year-old son made by the National Bureau of Investigation in his home in Barangay Ubay, Pulupandan.

The Supreme Court Third Division has ordered the NBI to get the boy from Peña and turn him over to his mother, movie actress and TV host Marie Roxanne "Plinky" Recto.

NBI Bacolod chief Mamerto Cortez said they conducted a second search of the house of Peña on a tip that Peña was at his home or might return to it just to confirm. The first search was conducted on Monday.

Cortez said NBI Deputy Director Reynaldo Esmeralda directed him to personally confirm if Peña and the boy are in the Ubay house or not.

Caretaker Dolly Iraga said Peña had gone to Manila in November and had not been back since then. Peña's son had left ahead of him, Iraga said.

When the NBI arrived at his home, Peña, who was contacted by a caretaker on a cellular phone, told Cortez the NBI agents were free to search his home.

In an interview through his cellular phone, Peña said the NBI could enter his house only with his permission.

LIGHTS GALORE ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS
The Lizares Mansion is all lit up for the holidays, drawing crowds every night. It is one of Iloilo's heritage houses.

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Village exec brings in firearms to protect holiday churchgoers

COTABATO CITY—A MUSLIM official has brought in firearms from Maguindanao to help secure churchgoers here from robbers and possible terror attack during the traditional "simbang gabi."

"I had promised them (Christian residents) equal protection, and I asked Muslims and Christians here to uphold mutual respect on matters of religious belief," said Sukarno Utto, chair of Barangay Shariff Kabunsuan in this city.

At about 2 a.m. Thursday, motorists saw Utto and his village guards hold vigil at the corner of De Mazenod and Notre Dame Avenues where students and teachers were easy prey to robbers at night.

Rewards

His companions said bags of hot *pan de sal* abound from generous passersby and motorists until 5 a.m. when they move out of the area.

Earlier, four *muftis* (guardians of House of Opinion) from four Muslim provinces ruled that terrorism was *haram* (forbidden).

The four *muftis* from Basilan, Lanao Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi had also drafted Friday a *khutab* (sermon) which contain Prophet Muhammad's Charter of Privileges upon the Monks of St. Catherine Monastery in Mount Sinai "on all aspects of human rights," including "the protection of Christians; and their freedom of worship and movement; freedom to appoint their own judges and to own and maintain property; exemption from military service, and the right to protection in (times of) war."

Utto said he had to request for long firearms from relatives for the local police.

Notorious place

He said the effort had clearance from local and police authorities, noting that his area had gained notoriety in the past with a number of robbers and gun-for-hire seeking shelter there.

Mayor Muslimin Sema said it was the duty of Muslim leaders to protect and secure followers of other religions under their leadership.

Resident Lito Coloso said securing the city's residents from criminal elements, like kidnappers, earned for Sema the confidence of the local business community which is dominated by Chinese-Filipino merchandisers.

Supt. Willy Dangane, city police chief, welcomes the barangay security initiative, saying the police needed civilian cooperation in addressing peace and order concerns.

Dangane urged residents to help local police curb crime rate by cooperating with the local police.

Extra work

"Your police cannot do this alone without your cooperation," Dangane said, calling on residents to help fight criminality in the city.

Col. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the 6th Infantry Division in nearby Shariff Kabunsuan province, said the Army division's Task Force Tugis was securing church premises during the dawn Mass. *Nash B. Maulana, Inquirer Mindanao*

Suspect in Canada murder of Ifugao woman arrested

BAGUIO CITY—THE CANADIAN police have arrested a suspect in the Oct. 1 murder of an Ifugao woman working for a family in Missassauga City, according to the Migrante office here.

Jocelyn Dulnuan, 27, a criminology graduate, was found dead inside the house of a Canadian couple, where she had been working for two months courtesy of the Canadian government's live-in caregiver program.

She left the country on a work permit for a Hong Kong caregiver job.

Marilyn, Dulnuan's Baguio-based sister, contacted the local Migrante office on Thursday to report that a suspect in her sister's murder had been arrested.

She said the suspect, Christian Figueroa, was originally from Ecuador and was granted immigrant status in Canada.

Marilyn was alerted by Canadian police about this development early this week. The Philippine government has not provided the family with updated reports about the investigation.

The news was well received in Dulnuan's hometown of Hingyon, Ifugao, said Flora Belinan, Migrante Cordillera coordinator.

For over two months, the Peel Regional Police in Missassauga had kept details of Dulnuan's case confidential and had asked the Philippine government to keep the case from the media until it can close its investigation, said the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration office here.

But reports from Ifugaos based in Canada and from Canadian newspapers on Dec. 18 and 19 showed that Dulnuan was killed when she tried to prevent a robbery.

"Our [Migrante] Ottawa chapter was so happy they were ready to announce the news themselves but it was already being reported [over] local television and in the papers," Belinan said.

Quoting the online reports posted by Canadian newspapers, Belinan said Figueroa was arrested in connection with previous robbery cases in the district.

Peel police officials described Figueroa as "a general laborer with a history of committing break-and-enters (burglary cases)," Belinan said. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

GMA

NETWORK

GMA NETWORK CATEGORICALLY DENIES THE REPORT THAT IT IS BEHIND ALLEGED AGB NIELSEN RATINGS MANIPULATION.

In its radio report, ABS-CBN / DZMM erroneously broadcast that AGB NIELSEN named GMA 7 as the network that allegedly funded an operation to bribe metered homes in Bacolod City to watch GMA shows and influence the ratings.

DZMM reporter Junrie Hidalgo on December 19, 2007 angled the story as: AGB NIELSEN UMAMIN SA DAYAAN, GMA NETWORK TAHASANG ITINURONG NASA LIKOD NG DAYAAN.

However, the affidavit in court submitted by Maya Reforma of AGB Nielsen belied such accusation against GMA Network.

The affidavit of AGB's Maya Reforma states: "There is no evidence that shows any significant impact on NUTAM data as a result of the activities PURPORTEDLY launched by GMA Network".

When asked what she can say about ABS-CBN's request to the Regional Trial Court to restrain AGB from distributing its ratings data --- Reforma stated: "There is no basis for it. The data is accurate and reliable."

GMA 7 points out that this only proves there is no truth to allegations by ABS-CBN that GMA was involved in tampering with the AGB ratings.

ABS-CBN just filed a multi-million peso civil case against the survey firm AGB Nielsen. The brouhaha started when ABS-CBN was approached by an alleged informant who claimed to be working with GMA.

GMA categorically denies that the ABS-CBN informant ever worked with or for GMA.

GMA has referred the matter to its outside legal counsel for appropriate action.

Apart from being improbable, the informant's claims as bandied about by ABS-CBN is also **NOT LOGICAL.**

GMA Network's ratings in the provinces --- particularly in the Visayas and Mindanao --- have not had any significant improvement since July of 2007 when it started to subscribe to the ratings of AGB. If there were any involvement in the alleged tampering of panel homes in the area by GMA Network, then its ratings there should have experienced significant increases.

GMA does not conduct manipulative promo efforts anywhere in the country. What it does is conduct legitimate field promo activities that are not deliberately directed AT PANEL HOMES but at the general television population of a certain locality.

While GMA Network promotes heavily in the Visayas and Mindanao, ABS-CBN does even more aggressive and wide-scale promos in these areas.

GMA has been spending considerable amounts of money to strengthen its signal, expand its reach and **for legitimate promos** to promote its programs in the Visayas and Mindanao. GMA values integrity and hard work as reflected by the credibility of its programs and its corporate core values. **It is not GMA's style to play dirty.** GMA programs are preferred and trusted by viewers in Luzon, Mega Manila and Metro Manila as proven by the ratings and general public opinion. A trial by publicity is not only unfair and damaging to GMA Network but also to its millions of loyal viewers.

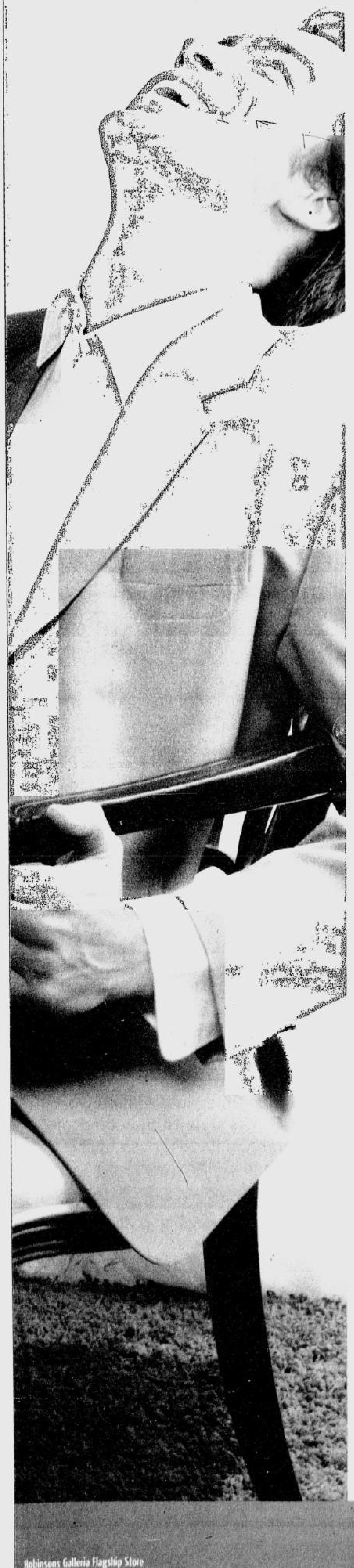
Also, for more than four years now, GMA Network has been complaining to AGB about the very big, highly illogical and unexplainable disparity between the cable and non-cable ratings of GMA's programs. ABS-CBN's programs do not exhibit such disparity.

It is only in the Philippines that the ratings of programs on non-cable or free TV households exhibit a very different behavior from the cable households. Coincidentally, the Philippines is also the only country in the world where a competing free-to-air TV station also operates or controls the dominant cable company. The owners of ABS-CBN directly or indirectly operate the country's largest cable company.

GMA Network has been sending letters to AGB since 2003, long before ABS-CBN's complaint. These letters show how much the Network wants to find out if there are indeed irregularities in the ratings data gathering process. GMA cited that ABS-CBN --- through the dominant cable operator --- can gain undue advantage because cable personnel, in the course of their work, can come across which homes AGB Nielsen has placed its meters.

GMA is determined to get to the bottom of this allegation.

GMA reserves the right to take such action as may be warranted, to protect its interests and reputation.



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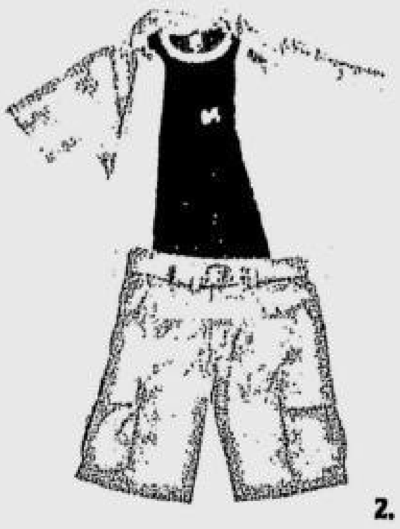
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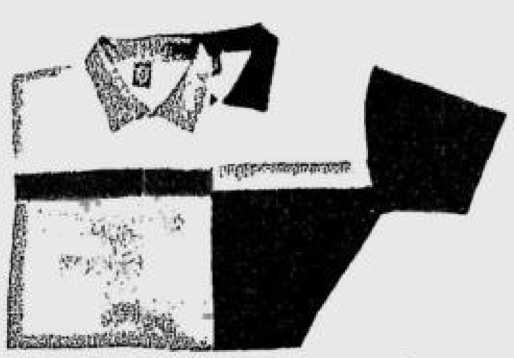
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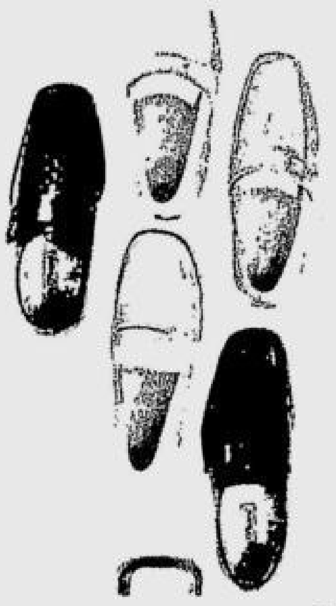
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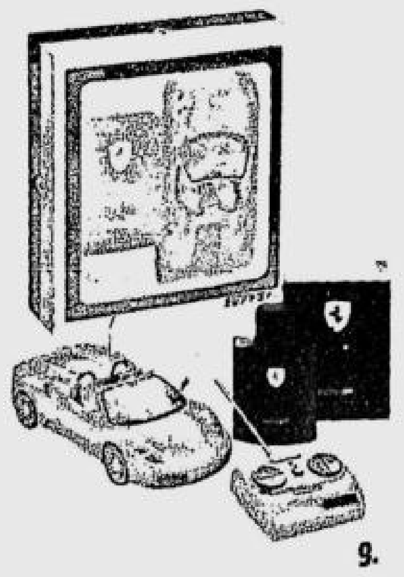
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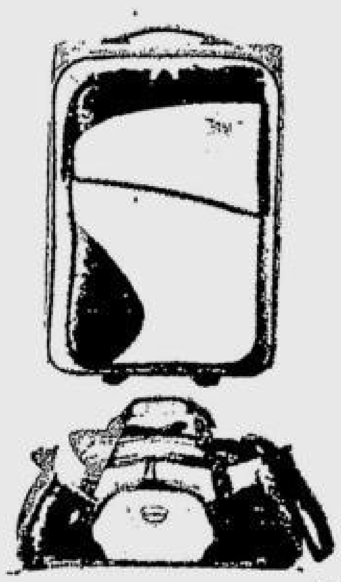
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Robinsons Department Store

They plowed the fields, took care of the kids, kept the faith

By Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez
Inquirer Mindanao

SUMILAO, BUKIDNON—UNDER THE heat of the sun, Johny Ligayao labored over a partly burned corn field to prepare it for another planting season.

The land is owned by his neighbor, Samuel Merida, leader of the Mapadayonon Panabhiusa sa mga Lumad Alang sa Damlag (Mapalad Inc.), who had walked to Manila along with other male members of his family to press the group's claim to a 144-hectare land in Barangay San Vicente.

Since Oct. 9, when 55 of the Mapalad members embarked on the 1,700-kilometer walk, the remaining 125 members have taken turns cultivating the backyard lots that their comrades left behind.

Everyone does his share of the hard work, working double-time to till not only his own piece of land but also that of his brother-farmers.

Ligayao recounted the time Mapalad decided to again lay claim to the property.

"We knew we had no money to spend for a trip to the Department of Agrarian Reform and Malacañang. So we decided to just walk to get there—that simple," he said.

Hard decision

It was a hard decision to make, especially for young men like Doti Ilao who left his pregnant wife and two little children to join the group. But the support of the other members was encouraging.

"We assured them that we would take care of their families. After they left, all the remaining members agreed that each would give half a ganta of rice every day to the families left behind," Ligayao said.

When Doti Ilao's wife fell ill, everyone pitched in for the medical and hospitalization expenses. But after a few days, when both his children also got sick, Ilao had to pull out of the group that was then nearing Butuan City and return home.

Ilao is filled with gratitude to the comrades who looked after his wife and children.

"When I returned, I saw how they had cared for my family. But I could no longer rejoin the group because of my kids," he said.

A day after receiving news of the decision of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the farmers held an emergency general assembly at their headquarters in San Vicente.

The atmosphere was tense, puzzling observers who viewed the decision as a triumph for the farmers.

Rene Peñas, Mapalad board member and paralegal officer, was precise: Ms Arroyo's order to have the disputed land reclassified from agro-industrial to agricultural use was short of what the farmers were demanding.

He said it showed that their fight had not ended but had only just begun.

Murmurs from the assembly indicated that everyone agreed.

An elderly Higaonon woman rose and exhorted the group to keep fighting. The farmers responded heartily, stomping their feet twice.

Unity

Ligayao walked to the center of the hall with a grim look on his face. "We learned that the other camp has been trying to divide us. Let us think of our brothers in Manila. If they hear that we are not united here, it will add to their hardship," he said.

A woman member explained Ligayao's remarks, saying "someone from the other camp" had offered 10 of the group members, including herself, a sum of money in the form of a loan.

"I was asked to sign some papers. I refused. All those who were also offered money, come forward now," she said.

One by one, the nine others rose, saying they had refused the offer and that they would not be bought.

Cheers rang in the hall.

It was a test of the farmers' unity. Through the highs and lows of their struggle, they have realized that unity was all they had.

Rich and poor

After 10 years of fighting for his piece of land, Ligayao has become a passionate believer in the poor man's quest.

"We will not get rich even if [San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo] Cojuangco gives us the 144 hectares that will be divided among 180 families, in the same manner that he will not become poor if he gives us this land," he said.

Shrubbery now chokes the barbed-wire fence enclosing the land that the farmers have been claiming for decades.

Beyond the fence is a state-of-the-art piggery that SMC affiliate San Miguel Foods Inc. began to build more than a year ago.

The farmers' worry is now centered not only on their claim but also on the health of their children who play and bathe in the ponds dotting the land.

Silent majority

According to Sumilao Mayor Mary Ann Baula, the SMFI piggery has generated 1,000 jobs and increased the town's income.

When Malacañang's decision was handed down, "that was the saddest day for the people of Sumilao," Baula said in a text message to the INQUIRER. "There is a silent majority here who want San Miguel to stay."

But the farmers know that the law is on their side, Peñas said.

"If only all landowners will abide by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program and not sift through its loopholes, many farmers will at last own their piece of land," he said.

Big business on Sumilao: Rule of law not emotion

From page A1

lion to develop it into a high-tech agro-industrial estate.

He said SMFI had spent millions of pesos on the development project.

Rule of law, not emotion

"We respect the President's decision, [but we will also respect and even] encourage any course of action that SMFI may decide to pursue to protect its rights," Arranza said.

"After all, making a stand that collides with even popular sentiments is a guaranteed right in a democracy, as long as this is based on the rule of law and not on emotion," he said.

The Sumilao farmers claiming the land had walked a total of 1,700 kilometers for two months to bring their case directly to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

On. Dec. 18, Ms Arroyo issued an executive order revoking the land-use conversion order on the property. The reclassification of the land from agro-industrial to agricultural use will allow it to be reverted to the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

But the farmers said they would remain encamped in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform central office in Quezon City until the DAR issues a notice of CARP coverage on the property, paving the way for its distribution to them.

According to Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman, the notice of coverage will be issued 15 days after Ms Arroyo's order becomes final and executory, and if SMFI will not appeal the order or take it to court.

P98M lost taxes

Arranza said the federation regretted that SMFI plans to bring investments and modern technology to Bukidnon "might no longer happen."

As a result, he said, the local government would no longer earn up to P98 million in taxes from the SMFI project, and would lose opportunities from some 2,800 expected jobs.

"The project [would have enabled] farmers to access financing for farm inputs that would translate to increased farm productivity and higher pricing," he said, adding:

"It [would have resulted] in an annual payroll value of P50 million and higher corn prices that competition between SMFI and traditional buyers would induce."

Arranza called on Ms Arroyo to review the executive order. He called as well for "a round of nonconfrontational talks between SMFI and the farmers that may produce a compromise beneficial to all."

"If the farmers who were already given 65 hectares adjacent to the 144-hectare land want some more, there are at least 46,000 hectares of idle government land in the Sumilao area. Why not open this huge tract to them and to others who want to farm?" he said.

Arranza also said the government could use revenues from the SMFI project to build roads, irrigation systems and other farm facilities in the area.

Cardinal's call

But the Church, through Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, continued its high-key campaign in support of the Sumilao farmers.

Rosales, who had consistently backed the farmers in their fight, appealed to SMFI officials to understand the latter's plight and give them the land out of kindness and sympathy.

Speaking at a press conference following a closed-door meeting with the farmers yesterday at the Paco Catholic School in Manila, Rosales called for an out-of-court agreement, saying a drawn-out legal battle would only extend the farmers' suffering: *"Pwede bang magkasundo na lang at huwag nang patagalin ang pagdurusa ng mga dukha?"*

Rosales said he understood that Ms Arroyo's order had to go through due process.

However, he said, there was also a higher moral principle that called for kindness, love, sympathy and compassion for the poor.

Church grateful to farmers

Asked whether he would bring his appeal directly to SMFI, Rosales said he would do so "if it would be good for the Sumilao farmers."

Cardinal Rosales celebrated Mass for the Sumilao farmers at the Paco Catholic School.

Having been a bishop of Malaybalay, Bukidnon, for 11 years, he delivered his homily mostly in Bisaya, translating it to Tagalog and back for the benefit of the others present.

The Mass was concelebrated by Cagayan de Oro Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, Cubao Bishop Honesto Ongtioco, Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, and Malaybalay Bishop Emeritus Francisco Claver.

At the press conference, Rosales said the farmers were thankful to the Church for embracing their cause.

He said the Church was in turn grateful to them for showing Filipinos a peaceful way to stand up for one's rights: "When they walked under the heat of the sun and the heavy rains, they taught us that there are issues in life that we need to fight for, and that there is a peaceful way to do this."

The farmers gave Rosales a cloth banner bearing the message "Restore the Dignity of the Sumilao farmers." The banner, now weather-worn, had accompanied the farmers in their two-month walk from Bukidnon to Manila.

One of the farmers said they were giving it to Rosales as a gift because he was the first to restore their dignity.

Alternative dispute resolution

The farmers' principal lawyer, Marlon Manuel of the Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap Panligal, said his clients would be amenable to resolving the land dispute without a legal battle.

"There's no problem for the farmers if we resort to alternative dispute resolution, with the backing of the Church, and reach an end to the case that will be acceptable to both parties," he told the INQUIRER.

Manuel, who accompanied the farmers to their meeting with Rosales at the Paco Catholic School, said "the cardinal's words gave them fresh hope."

"With the Church's full support, they will not give up their struggle," he said. *With a report from Jerome Aning*

Hot Lamborghini, Ferrari, Porsches seized in Makati

From page A1

posed President Joseph Estrada, went to the site of the raid and claimed that he had paid the necessary taxes for his vehicles, including a black Ferrari.

"(Ejercito) said that just because of one Lamborghini, all the other vehicles were also questioned," the source said, adding that Ejercito was trying to dispute the warrant of seizure and detention.

Villar said the Lamborghini was tagged a hot car because the owner could not present a single document attesting to its legality.

The luxury sports car's plate number originally belonged to a Mitsubishi Pajero, raising the suspicion that it had indeed been smuggled.

Wedding gift

The source said that the 1995 Ferrari, which costs P8.7 million, was given to Ejercito by a prominent businessman as a wedding gift.

A PASG operative, who refused to be named for lack of authority to speak about the raid, said Ejercito himself went to Auto Sports while the raid was in progress.

Ejercito denied that he attempted to intervene during the raid. *(See story on this page.)*

A Palace official, who knew of the raid, said Ejercito had also called Villar to ask that five of the cars be spared because they were his.

But a PASG operative said the owner of Auto Sports identified the following as owned by Ejercito—a Mercedes Benz 320 with Plate No. ZFT-700, a Mercedes Benz 350 SL (NFT-834), a BMW M6 (EJV-707), a Range Rover (HSE-800), a classic 1956 Thunderbird, a black Ferrari (UNT-829) and a BMW 750 (TLU-878).

Villar said the raid on Auto Sports was not based on Ejercito's tip. "Our operatives got a hint about the warehouse there when a Ferrari entered the establishment," he said.

'Electronic hand tools'

He said PASG operatives monitored the activities in the area for two weeks before they conducted the raid.

Import documents showed that some of the vehicles were declared as "electronic hand tools," he said.

"Most of them came from Cebu," the PASG chief said.

Edmund Arugay, PASG chief for operations, said that of the 81 luxury vehicles, 31 were confirmed to have been smuggled.

"We are verifying the status of the rest, but we could say that 80 percent of the total number of vehicles would be forfeited in favor of the government because of lack of papers," said Arugay, a deputy director of the National Bureau of Investigation.

The car owners' failure to show the documents would mean that they would be charged with violating the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines, he said.

LTO in cahoots?

Arugay said the task force would also look into the possible involvement of some Land Transportation Office personnel in the illegal importation and undervaluation of the vehicles.

"We suspect that some of them faked the vehicles' certificates of payment," he said.

Erap son denies interfering in raid

By Jeannette I. Andrade

SAN JUAN CITY MAYOR JOSEPH VICtor Ejercito denied allegations that he attempted to intervene in the confiscation of 81 allegedly smuggled vehicles at a Makati City car shop, saying that he simply was having two of his cars serviced when the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group (PASG) seized the vehicles.

Ejercito said his Range Rover with Plate No. HSE-800 and his BMW M6 with Plate No. EJV-707 were undergoing repairs at Auto Sports 24 Corp.

Auto Sports reportedly specializes in the repair of luxury vehicles.

Documents as evidence

"I brought documents to the shop to prove that I own the vehicles and that I legally acquired them," Ejercito told the INQUIRER.

He further explained that a black Ferrari with Plate No. UNT-829 was not his but belonged to a friend, Iñigo Zobel.

"I did not want his (Zobel) car to be included in the seizure. I just informed the raiding team about who owns the Ferrari. I couldn't own a Ferrari," the San Juan City mayor said.

For his part, Jay Salangguste, National Bureau of Investigation special agent, told the INQUIRER that the mayor did not interfere during the raid.

No political color

He backed up Ejercito's statement that he was just having two of his vehicles serviced at the shop and was there to present proof that they were not smuggled vehicles.

Salangguste said the antismuggling operation had neither political nor personal targets.

"We simply served the warrant and it is up to the owners to present the pertinent documents to prove that the vehicles are theirs," he said.

He said the owners must be able to present documents from the Land Transportation Office and the Bureau of Customs so the vehicles could be cleared and subsequently released.

Cebu inmates' 'Thriller' in Time's most-watched list

From page A1

They have made it to the pages of Time—on the international magazine's list of the most watchable Internet videos for 2007.

The convicts' interpretation of Michael Jackson's pop hit was No. 5 of the 10 "most popular viral videos" of the year, or the "Web clips we couldn't stop watching." The list included international celebrities like Britney Spears and Hillary Clinton.

Downloaded 9-M times

The dance video by the inmates at the Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center has been downloaded more than nine million times, Time said.

The magazine described the performance of the "orange-jumpsuited accused murderers, rapists and drug dealers" as a "homage" to Jackson's "Thriller."

"Questions arose about whether the 1,500 Filipino jailhouse rockers were enjoying some well-choreographed creative expression or suffering abuse at the hands of prison officials with MTV aspirations," it said.

The video was posted on YouTube by Cebu provincial consultant on security Byron Garcia on July 18. Two days later, the video had some 266,000 views. A week later, it had over a million hits.

Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia had said the "Thriller" video showed the prisoners in a "routine practice" for a number they were presenting on Aug. 1, the 438th founding anniversary of Cebu province.

Part of exercise

Dancing, Garcia said, has been part of the prisoners' daily exercise under the jail's rehabilitation program, which began in April 2006. The prisoners exercise from 6:30 a.m. to 8 a.m. and again from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The inmates have presented other dance numbers during monthly celebrations held at the facility, including the movie.Sister Act 1's "I Will Follow You," Sister Act 2's "Hail Holy Queen" and the Algorithm march, all of which have been uploaded on YouTube.

The other videos that made Time's list were "Leave Britney Alone," where a gay teen sobs in defense of "a fallen pop princess," with 18 million downloads; "The Landlord," with Will Ferrell, with 50 million downloads;

Ms South Carolina Teen USA's answer on "Why Americans are Unable to Locate the US on the Map;" "Hillary 1984," a "political attack ad" depicting Clinton as "Big Brother." *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

Cheaper meds battle shifts to bicam

By Christian V. Esguerra

WITH HALF OF THE JOB DONE, House members are gearing up for a much tougher fight at the bicameral conference committee over the much-awaited bill promising cheaper medicines for poor Filipinos.

Iloilo Rep. Ferjenel Biron, principal author of House Bill 2844, yesterday said he was expecting a clash between his group and its Senate counterpart over a provision in the House version requiring the establishment of a drug price regulatory board.

The board will be tasked to establish price ceilings on medicines based on factors such as retail prices of similar drugs abroad, currency exchange rates, and the cost of production and labor.

The bill prescribes that "no retailer may sell drugs or medicines at a retail price exceeding the maximum retail price fixed by the board."

Biron said the House contingent could not strike a compromise with the Senate which wanted the provision dropped from the reconciled version of the measure.

At most, he said congressmen would be willing to place a time cap for the duration of the regulatory board to allow both chambers to assess if the strategy actually made drug prices more affordable.

Biron said the House panel would be open to a time frame of perhaps two years, with a condition that the bill be fine-tuned before the 14th Congress ends in 2010.

"Beyond this, the provision cannot be bargained [away]," he said.

"We need a drug price regulatory board if we really want to bring down the prices of medicines in our country. We can't give our people false hopes," Biron said.

Unfortunately for Biron and company, Sen. Mar Roxas, the author of the Senate version of the bill, is strongly opposed to a regulatory board.

Roxas, a former trade secretary and investment banker, argues that the idea of a price regulatory board goes against the spirit of free enterprise besides opening the process to intense lobbying and manipulation.

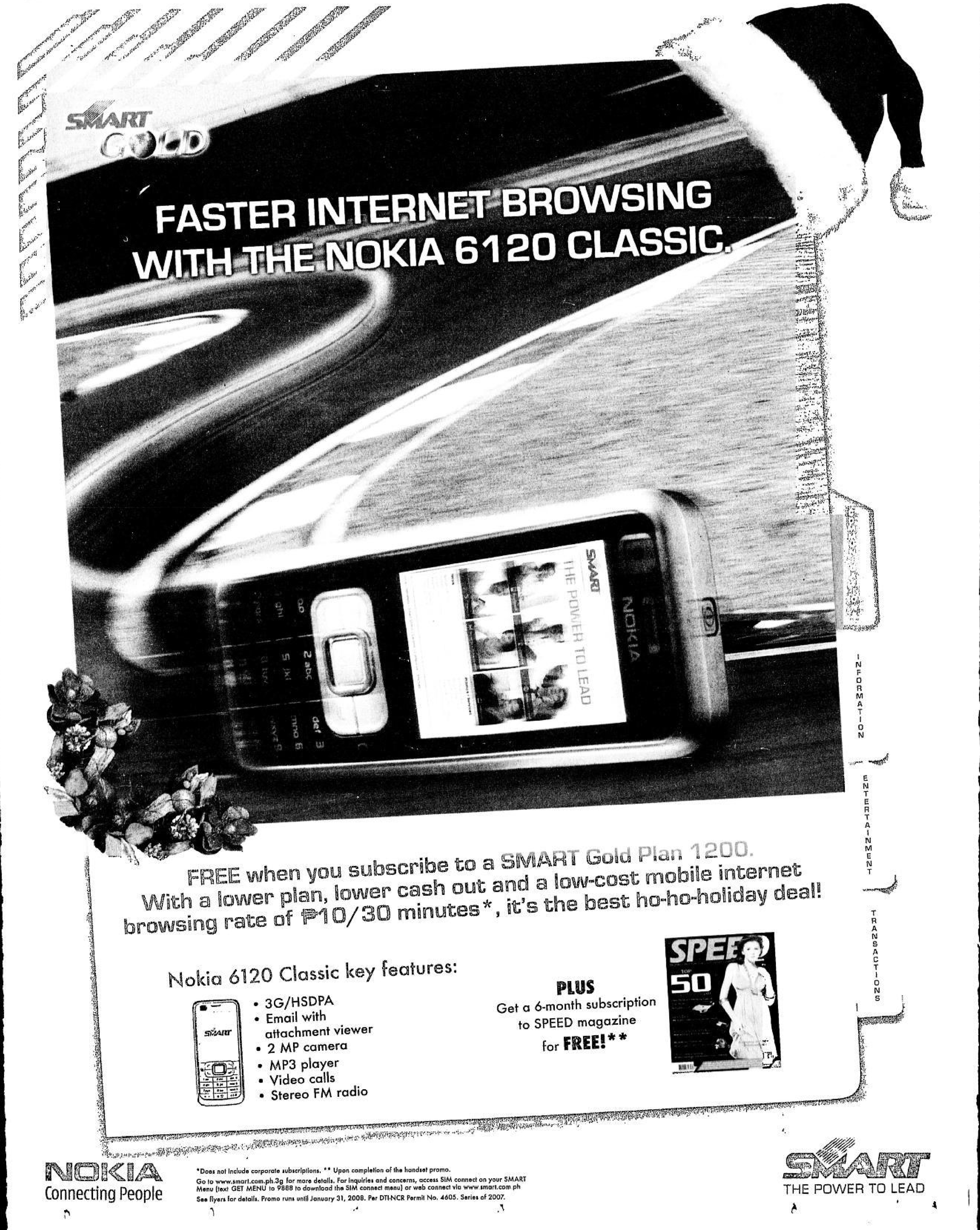
The two chambers clashed over the same issue during a "pre-bicam" toward the end of the previous Congress. Roxas was implacable and only sent representatives to deal with his counterparts.

Roxas is again heading the Senate panel this time.

The House team will be composed of Rep. Antonio Alvarez, chair of the committee on trade and industry, Minority Leader Ronaldo Zamora, Deputy Minority Leader Risa Hontiveros, Rep. Janette Garin, Rep. Edcel Lagman, Rep. Jack Duavit, Rep. Junie Cua, Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr., and Biron.

As provided by HB 2844, the board will be headed by the health secretary or by his designated undersecretary, with the trade secretary as vice chair.

Members will include the head of the Bureau of Food and Drugs, the president of the Philippine Health Insurance Corp., a faculty member of a health sciences school, and two representatives from the consumers' sector.



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DID YOU KNOW

THOUSANDS joined the 6.5-kilometer funeral march that carried movie legend Fernando Poe Jr.'s body from Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City to the Manila North Cemetery on Dec. 22, 2004. Crowd estimates ranged from the tens of thousands to 300,000. About 200 policemen and 600 volunteer marshals were deployed at the cemetery. Poe died of a stroke on Dec. 14, 2004. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

1 killed, companion injured in Fort Bonifacio bar brawl

Fatality was a pilot and PMA graduate

By Julie M. Aurelio

A 34-YEAR-OLD COMMERCIAL PILOT WAS mauled to death yesterday morning by seven men during a brawl near the Embassy Bar in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

The suspects and two women companions were immediately arrested by the police and may be charged with homicide and physical injuries.

The fatality, Carlo Jose Castellano, reportedly a part-time pilot, was not the target of the suspects who were allegedly after his friend Zedrick Ponce.

A resident of Bonifacio Heights in Fort Bonifacio, Castellano is reportedly the son of a retired general.

Ponce, 34, survived the attack. Castellano was pronounced dead on arrival at 5:32 a.m. at the Makati Medical Center.

The suspects were arrested by police stationed at the Embassy Bar and a nearby precinct.

Chief Insp. Celso Rodriguez of the criminal investigation section identified the suspects as Edmer Antonin, 22, of Pasay City; and Edmund Quirante, 25; Rolly Quirante, 37; Marvin Matias, 28; Wilfred Quirante, 23; Julius Quirante, 20; Joseph Quirante, 26, all from Quezon City.

The women, who were with the men aboard a silver Mitsubishi Adventure (ZEE 715), were identified as Michelle Quirante, 27, and Rowena, Sitchon, 20, from Quezon City.

Rodriguez said Castellano flew for international airlines and was a graduate of Class 1995 of the Philippine Military Academy.

"*Ume*-extra *siya sa mga* airline. He was not working for a specific airline company," he said.

An initial investigation by SPO2 Gracio Cangco showed that Castellano and Ponce had just left the bar around 4:45 a.m. and were walking towards the parking lot when the suspects' van stopped in front of the victims. The suspects then accosted the victims.

Rodriguez said Ponce could have irked the suspects when he accidentally bumped them at the rest room of the Embassy Bar.

The seven men allegedly took turns hitting Castellano and Ponce, who had several bruises, cuts and contusions in different parts of the body. He was later brought to the Rizal Medical Center. Rodriguez said the women stayed inside the car during the incident.

Policemen at the Embassy Bar blocked the suspects' vehicle, preventing their escape.

Mayor Freddie Tiñga condemned the mauling incident and warned outsiders against disrupting the peace in the city. "We strongly condemn this brutal killing," he said. "To think that the suspects are not even residents of our city. We warn them not to mess with our city or (they will) face dire consequences."

The mayor lauded the police for the immediate arrest of the suspects. He said some of the suspects were reportedly *balikbayan* (returning residents) who were in the country for the holidays.

Meanwhile, the city government will discuss additional security measures with officials of the Bonifacio Estate Services Corporation to avoid similar incidents in the future.

The Taguig City Police helps security forces man Fort Bonifacio Global City.

WELCOME TREAT
Ice cream cones are given for free to Overseas Filipino Workers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport who have been arriving in droves to spend Christmas here with their families. JESS YUSON

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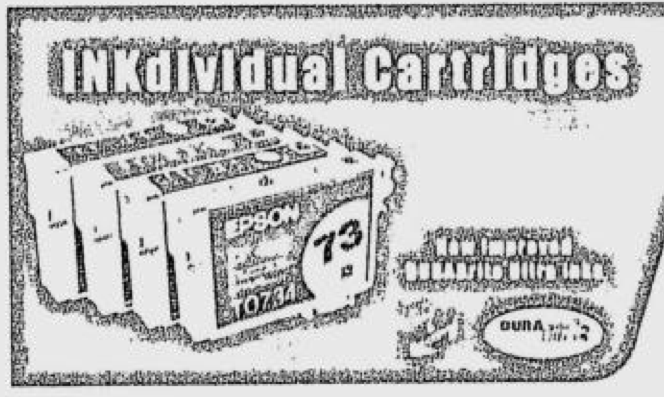

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Recruitment agency in Manila faces estafa charges

By Allison W. Lopez

AT LEAST 37 PEOPLE, SOME from as far away as Pangasinan, filed estafa and large-scale illegal recruitment charges against alleged members of a syndicate that promised them jobs in Australia and New Zealand.

All the suspects are at large.

The charges were filed in the Manila City Prosecutor's Office by the victims who were reportedly promised jobs as apple-pickers, waiters and caregivers.

The complainants said Fatima Cecille Almutairiz, alias Cecille Moron of Swen International Manpower Agency at 501 Prudential Life building, Sta. Cruz, was arrested last week by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

But Almutairiz was reportedly freed after some victims agreed to a settlement.

The suspect and associates Ron Mijares, alias Sam Miguel, and Lani Vidal were indicted for estafa and non-bailable large-scale recruitment charges.

The charges were dismissed by Pasay City inquest prosecutor Nolasco Fernandez Jr. for "lack of interest" when four complainants filed a joint affidavit of desistance on Dec. 14.

Almutairiz, a resident of Ilang-Ilang Street, Fairview, Quezon City, was nabbed in an entrapment operation on Dec. 11 after receiving P20,000 worth of marked money at a restaurant in Pasay City.

The money was supposedly for job applicants Richelle Delicana, Donna Ruth Olmedilla, Randy Mampusti and Mildred Masagca.

The other complainants, including Joy de Venecia of Bulacan, reportedly a relative of House Speaker Jose de Venecia lamented Almutairiz's release and sought the help of Mayor Alfredo Lim.

Cristina Alfero, 30, of Calasiao, Pangasinan, said she borrowed money to pay the P80,000 processing fee for a care-giving job with a $1,200 a month (about P50,000) salary. Jesusa Mendoza of Bulacan, meanwhile, paid P20,000 in June for the $600-$700-a-month job as apple picker.

But when the complainants got their passports, one of them noticed that the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) stub was not validated.

On Dec. 18, the POEA issued a certification saying Swen International Manpower Agency, also represented by Randy Mambusti, Bethalyn Calago and Edwin Magtalas, was not licensed as a recruitment agency.

CRES
Social Welfare Organization of the Philippines
Green

FOR A GREEN ENVIRONMENT

The Charitable, Religious, Educational and Social Welfare Organization of the Philippines (Cres) led by its chair, Justice Emilio Gancayco, and president Dr. James Dy, held tree planting ceremonies at the Quezon City Elliptical Circle in support of environment programs in the city. In photo are Justice Emilio Gancayco, vice chair Ruben Reyes, Dr. Dy, QC Park Foundation Inc. lawyer Charito Planas and other members of the organization.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Police to use sidewalk vendors in fight against crime in shopping areas

By Alcuin Papa

APPARENTLY FRUSTRATED AT not being able to drive away sidewalk vendors, the Manila Police District (MPD) said it would instead ask the vendors to help fight crime.

Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales said his men could not clear the streets of Divisoria, Quiapo and Binondo of vendors because the city government allowed them to sell their wares this Christmas season.

Rosales said he asked the vendors instead to help police go after petty criminals like snatchers, pickpockets, cell phone robbers and hold-up men who prey on holiday shoppers.

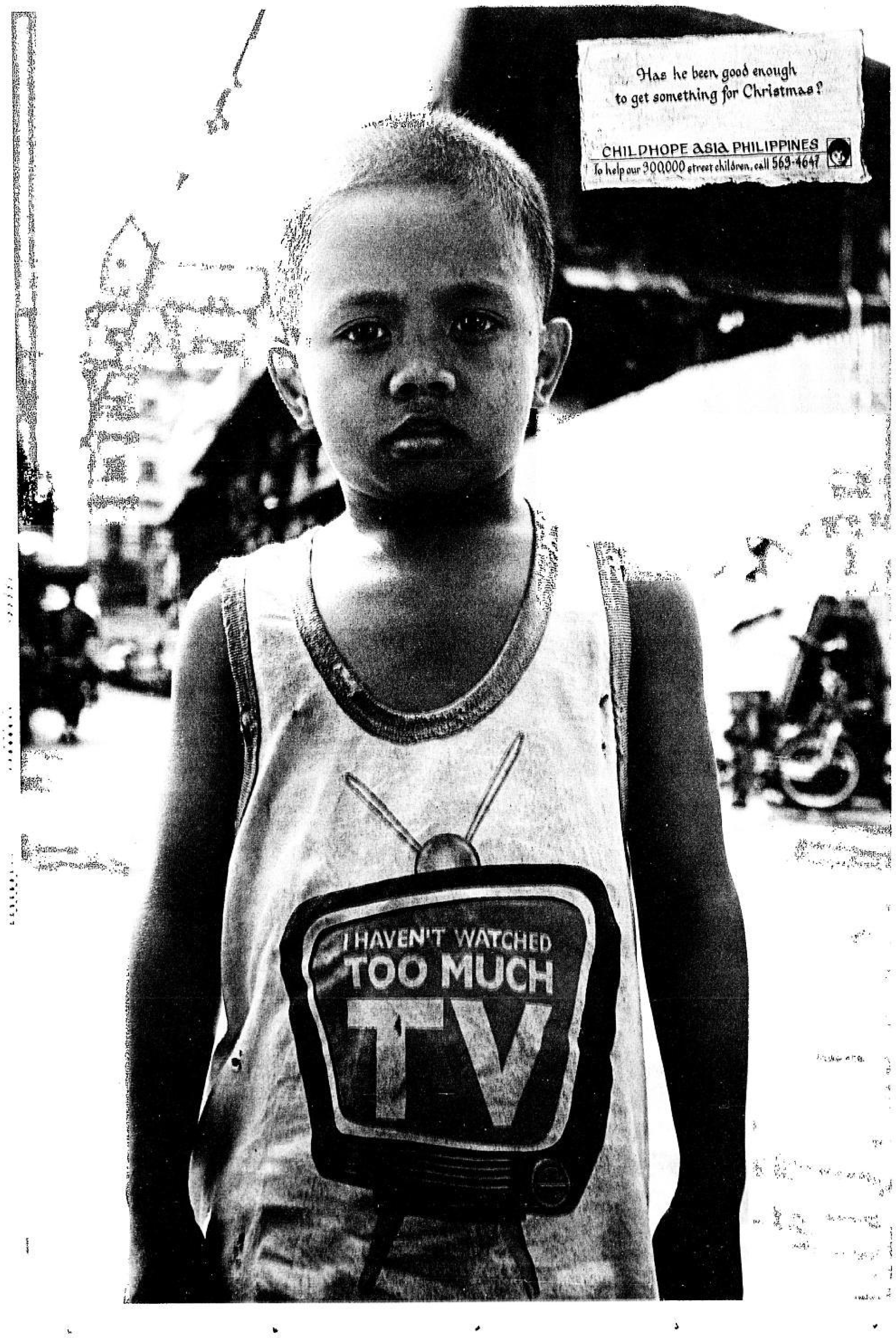
The vendors could also serve as witnesses, the MPD chief said.

"They should cooperate with the police to be able to sell their goods. If not, their businesses will be adversely affected," Rosales told reporters yesterday in Camp Crame.

Rosales said vendors would also be asked to keep their areas clean.

He said he had conducted dialogues with street vendors to ask for their cooperation.

Holiday shoppers have complained that sidewalk vendors caused congestion in Divisoria, Quaipo and Binondo, apart from turning these areas into havens for petty criminals.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to get something for Christmas?
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METROBRIEFS

No malice in article, says Lolit

TALENT manager and talk show host Lolit Solis yesterday claimed there was "no malice" in the article she wrote about actors Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby that reportedly described the two as gay. Solis, who was slapped with a P12-million libel suit by the singer-hosts of ABS-CBN for an Oct. 15 article in Pilipino Star Ngayon, insisted in her counter-affidavit submitted to Manila assistant prosecutor Dennis Aguila that Pascual and Milby were both "public figures." Solis claimed in her "Take It, Take It" column that she saw the actors "sweet" to each other at a hotel coffeeshop on Oct. 12. Pascual and Milby denied the allegations, saying they were not at the hotel on that date. Solis' editor Veronica Samio, who was also named as respondent, said in her counter-affidavit that she could not be held liable because she was already on leave from her duties at the time. Samio added that she had never seen the draft of Solis' column, nor had she edited the copy or written its title "Sam and Piolo, *naglalampungan*." Citing a case in the United States, Samio said she could not be included in the libel suit since she "did not participate in the preparation, editing or publishing" of an alleged defamatory article. ***Allison W. Lopez***

7 buses destroyed in QC fire

AN HOUR-LONG fire razed a bus terminal, destroying seven parked public utility buses yesterday morning in Novaliches, Quezon City. The blaze was allegedly caused by negligent welders using acetylene tanks. Barangay watchmen said firefighting units were able to put out the fire before the flames could spread to a neighboring gasoline station and there was no reported casualty. Quezon City Fire District reports said the fire hit the Lipad Transit terminal, owned by Wendell Lipad, at around 10:35 a.m., yesterday, along Old Sauyo Road, Barangay Sauyo. The fire quickly gobbled up the seven buses parked inside the terminal even if the blaze only reached the first alarm. Barangay Sauyo Services and Development Office (BSDO) officer Rolando Mapugay told the INQUIRER it was fortunate the fire spared a nearby Caltex gasoline station. Arson investigators said they are still investigating the cause of the fire. The estimated cost of damage was not immediately available.

Jeannette I. Andrade

Trader loses car to thieves

MANDALUYONG policemen are hunting down three men who forcibly took the vehicle of a businessman early yesterday morning. Leonardo Padilla told authorities that he was parking his Mazda 6 in front of his house on Haig Street, around 2 a.m. when three men on board a Honda Civic suddenly arrived and took his car at gunpoint. One of the gunmen also pistol-whipped the victim before escaping with the vehicle, police said. ***Tina G. Santos***

Ham for Navotas residents

POOR residents of Navotas City will have ham on their tables this Christmas after the local government announced it would distribute a kilo of ham for each needy family in the city. "We want Navoteños to feel the spirit of Christmas. After all, there are still many good reasons to thank the Lord and to hope for a wonderful New Year," said Mayor Toby Tiangco, one of the country's Outstanding Young Man awardee for the year. The city has allotted a budget of P1 million for the project. Starting today, under the Share a Blessing project, an estimated 10,000 families will serve ham for the traditional Christmas Eve dinner. "It's a small price to pay to make each family's Christmas more meaningful," according to Tiangco. Local government officials and city hall employees will also receive their 14th month bonus today. ***Nancy Carvajal***

Betancourt release under way, says ex-hubby

PARIS—FRANCE OFFERED ON Wednesday to take in any Marxist rebels exchanged in a prisoner swap if Colombia's FARC released a group of hostages including French-Colombian politician Ingrid Betancourt.

French Prime Minister Francois Fillon said Colombian President Alvaro Uribe had made it clear that his government wanted France to accommodate the leftist guerrillas after their release.

"France has said it would be willing, along with other European and Latin American countries, to do that," Fillon told RFI radio.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) announced Tuesday that it had ordered the release of three hostages, including Clara Rojas, kidnapped in 2002 alongside Betancourt, and her son born in captivity.

The Marxist rebels said they would free lawmaker Consuelo Gonzalez as well as Rojas—a top aide in Betancourt's 2002 Colombian presidential bid—and the 3- or 4-year-old boy born of an insurgent father.

KIDNAPPED former Colombian presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, right, and her running mate Clara Rojas during their captivity at an undisclosed location in this image from television made available on Aug. 31, 2003. AP

France has been deeply interested in Colombia's hostage crisis since Betancourt was kidnapped while campaigning for the Colombian presidency in 2002.

The proposed prisoner swap would involve the release of 500 FARC members jailed in Colombia in return for 45 hostages held by the rebels, including Betancourt and three Americans seized during a US-backed anti-drug operation.

Meanwhile, Betancourt's former husband Fabrice Delloye told the private Europe 1 radio network that the liberation of the three hostages was "under way," adding that they "had left the FARC security zone."

Her daughter Melanie Delloye added: "It's the first unilateral gesture by the FARC in six years," and stressed that this was "great news."

The French prime minister said he believed there was "more than a small hope" of seeing Betancourt herself released, and that a "process of negotiation and releases" was taking shape.

"The world is watching Colombia, Ingrid Betancourt and the action of President Uribe," he said.

"All of Latin America's heads of state are mobilized," Fillon said, adding that President Nicolas Sarkozy had "intervened very forcefully with the Americans for them to support our efforts in the region."

"I think that if the situation is changing, it is probably also a sign that US policy on the matter has changed," Fillon said. *AFP*

Israel building Olmert a nuclear bunker

JERUSALEM—PRIME MINISTER Ehud Olmert's residence is being outfitted with a bunker that can withstand a nuclear or chemical attack, an Israeli daily reported on Thursday.

Workers at Olmert's official Jerusalem residence are thickening walls, digging, and installing air purification equipment capable of countering chemical agents, according to the report in the mass circulation Yediot Ahronot.

Mark Regev, a spokesperson for Olmert, would not comment on the report.

"But obviously all governments have an obligation to guarantee the ongoing and efficient functioning of the government in a crisis situation," Regev said.

The Yediot report quoted anonymous Olmert representatives as denying the construction of a bunker, saying the workers were merely adding a "safe room," a room with thick concrete walls and metal-shuttered windows that is a feature of many Israeli buildings. Israeli construction codes require such rooms to protect residents in case of rocket attacks.

The work at Olmert's residence follows the renovation of a bunker underneath the building housing his office, where Cabinet ministers are supposed to convene in case of an attack on Israel's government center in Jerusalem, the paper reported.

As part of the push to protect Israel's leaders from a a nonconventional attack, the paper wrote, Israel is also building a giant nuclear bunker in the hills several kilometers outside Jerusalem that will be accessible via a tunnel leading from government offices inside the city. *AP*

Wise tips to beat
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Christmas is a time
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love throughout the
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Look for party costume!!!
Wine for X'mas party
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Conservative wins S. Korea presidency

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—LEE MYUNG-BAK, A conservative politician famous for his success in business but dogged by questions about his character, swept to a huge victory on Wednesday in a presidential election dominated by economic concerns.

Voters cast aside widespread misgivings about Lee's ethics, betting that he would fulfill his pledge to whip the economy to the heady levels of the 1990s, when growth averaged around 7 percent a year. But Lee's landslide win was tempered by a new investigation directed at him, and if he is indicted it could nullify his victory before inauguration day on Feb. 25.

The results on Wednesday reflected voters' deep dissatisfaction with the liberal administration of President Roh Moo-hyun, who is limited to a single five-year term by the constitution, and his handling of the economy. By turning to Lee, the candidate of the opposition conservative Grand National Party, South Koreans put bread-and-butter issues ahead of the larger themes of social equality, political change and reconciliation with North Korea that had influenced their votes in the past decade.

LEE AP

This time, relations with North Korea or the United States barely registered among voters. But political analysts said Lee, a pro-business, pragmatic politician not known for taking strong ideological positions, would improve Seoul's strained relations with Washington. As for North Korea, Lee has said that he will continue the policy of engaging it economically but that he will demand more concessions.

With 48.7 percent of the total votes, Lee, who had been leading in opinion polls for months, fell slightly short of his goal of garnering more than half of all votes cast, something no one has accomplished since South Korea began holding democratic elections in 1987. But in returning the Grand National Party to power after 10 years of liberal rule, he won by the largest margin since 1987, with his nearest rival, Chung Dong-young, a candidate allied with Roh, coming in with only 26.1 percent.

Still, political analysts and voters interviewed indicated that the numbers did not amount to a strong endorsement of Lee but reflected the absence of viable contenders among the 12 candidates. "I voted for Lee Myung-bak even though I think he's a little corrupt," said Kim Cho-rong, 21, a college student studying interior design. "I figured someone who is a little guilty but competent was better for our society than someone who is innocent but incompetent. *NYT*

US Senate passes gun bill in response to rampage

WASHINGTON—THE US Congress, prodded by the deadliest shooting rampage in modern American history, passed legislation on Wednesday to keep guns out of the hands of the mentally ill.

Without objection, the Senate and House of Representatives approved the measure, which would bolster background checks for gun buyers, and sent it to President George W. Bush to sign.

The measure would be the first major new US gun-control law since 1994. It was drafted after a gunman with a history of mental illness killed himself and 32 others in April at Virginia Tech university.

The product of months' of talks, the bill was finally agreed to as lawmakers prepared to wrap up their work for the year and head home for the holidays.

"Together, we have crafted a bill that will prevent gun violence, but maintain the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens" to bear arms, said Democratic Rep. Carolyn McCarthy of New York, a chief sponsor of the bill.

McCarthy was elected to Congress in 1996, three years after her husband was killed and son injured when a gunman opened fire on a commuter train.

The 4 million-member National Rifle Association, a powerful US pro-gun lobbying group that has helped stop numerous gun-control bills, backed this one.

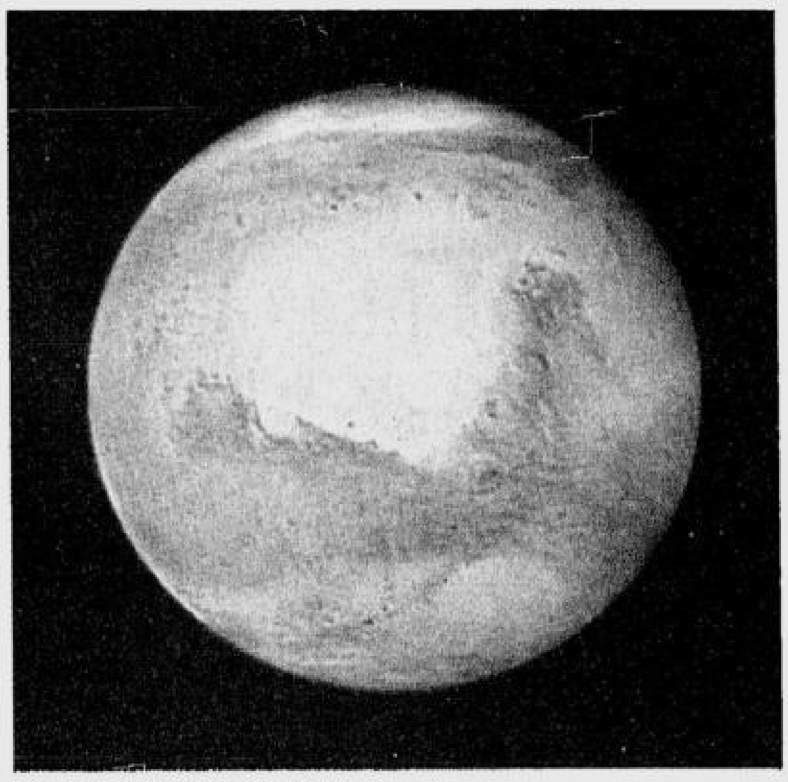
"Everybody on both the sides of the issue of firearms' ownership joined together," said Democratic Rep. John Dingell of Michigan, a former NRA board member and another chief sponsor of the bill.

"Both sides recognize this as a very sensible and proper way to see to it that the law is enforced and people are protected," Dingell told Reuters in a telephone interview.

Americans are among the world's most heavily armed people, and the country has one of the world's highest murder rates.

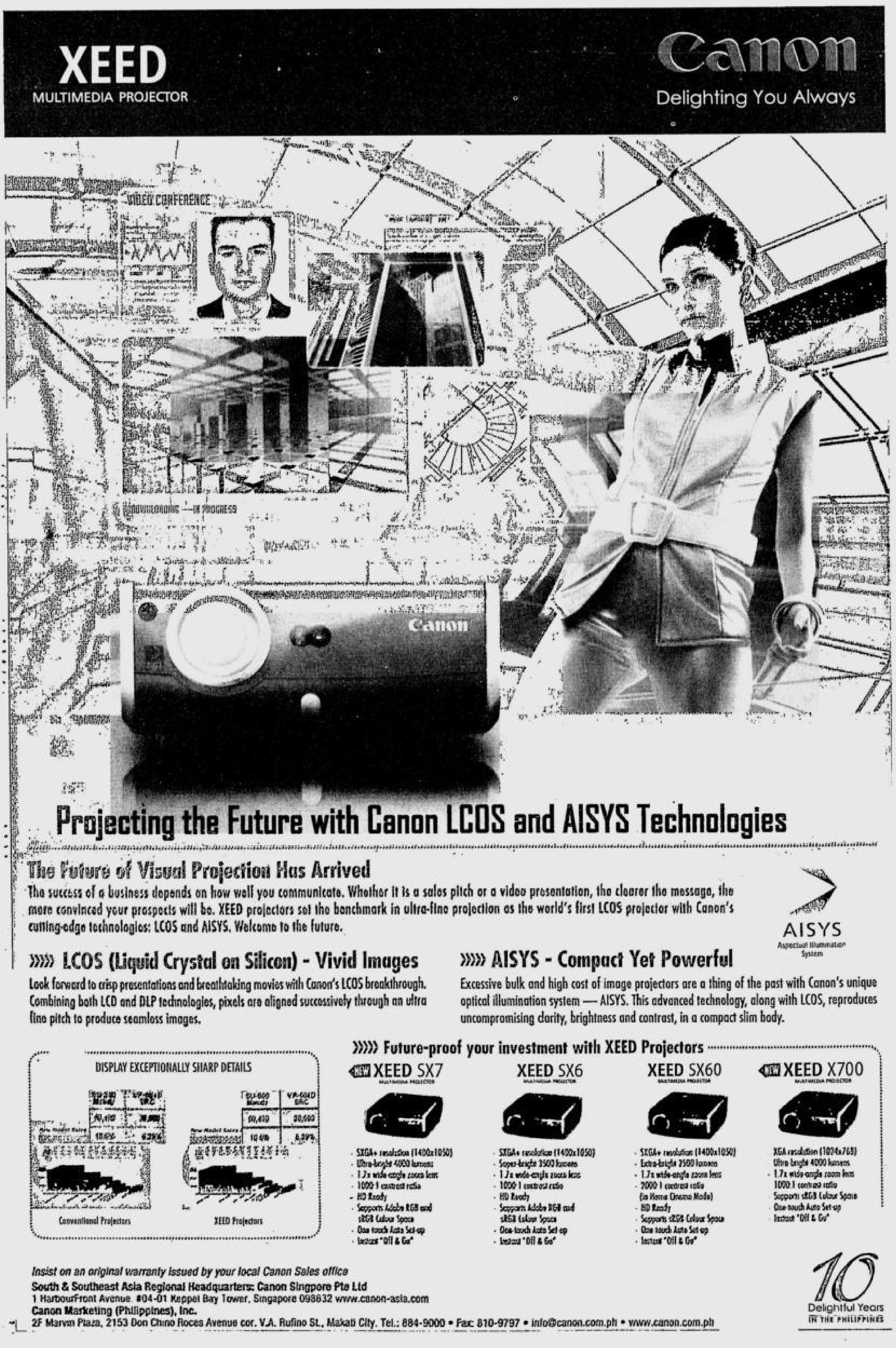
There are an estimated 250 million privately owned guns in the United States, which has a population of about 300 million.

About 30,000 people a year die from gun wounds. *Reuters*



RED PLANET UP CLOSE

This image provided by Nasa's Hubble Space Telescope shows a close-up of the red planet Mars when it was closest to the Hubble Space Telescope—just 88 million km away taken with Hubble's Wide Field and Planetary Camera 2. Mars was closest to Earth on Dec. 18. AP



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10 Delightful Years IN THE PHILIPPINES

WorldBriefs

Europe proposes limits on auto emissions

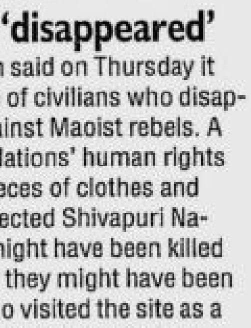
PARIS—European Union officials told leading automakers on Wednesday to make deep cuts in tailpipe emissions of the cars they produce or face fines that could reach billions of euros. Companies including Volkswagen and Renault immediately promised a fight to weaken the proposed legislation, saying that compliance would be difficult and that it would hurt their competitiveness around the world. But European officials insisted that the legislation was necessary if the region was to continue leading global efforts to reduce greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide. A tough law for car pollution "demonstrates that the European Union is committed to being a world leader in cutting CO2 emissions and the development of a low-carbon economy," the president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, said. The European environment commissioner, Stavros Dimas, said the industry's decade-old promises to meet emissions reduction targets voluntarily had not yielded the desired results, making the tougher action necessary. *NYT*

CIA to release documents about videos

WASHINGTON—The CIA says it will begin handing over documents to Congress about the destruction of videotapes that showed harsh interrogation of two terror suspects after a House of Representatives committee threatened to subpoena two agency officials. Democratic Rep. Silvestre Reyes, chair of the House intelligence committee, said on Wednesday he had prepared subpoenas for former and current CIA officials and attorneys if they refuse to appear before the committee voluntarily. The panel rejected a Bush administration request that it defer to an executive branch preliminary inquiry and has launched its own investigation into the videotape destruction. *AP*

Ex-Thai tourism chief quits polls over bribery claims

BANGKOK—A former governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand on Thursday withdrew her candidacy in upcoming polls after allegations emerged of bribery during her tenure, a spokesperson from her party said. A Los Angeles-based couple were arrested in the United States this month for allegedly paying $1.7 million in bribes to a Thai government official for the right to manage the Bangkok International Film Festival from 2003. At the time Juthamas Siriwan was head of the tourism body, which sponsors the festival. *AFP*



JUTHAMAS AP

Nepal finds possible burial site of 'disappeared'

KATMANDU—Nepal's human rights commission said on Thursday it had found what may be a burial or cremation site of civilians who disappeared during the country's decade-long war against Maoist rebels. A team, including representation from the United Nations' human rights agency, found half-burnt logs, partially buried pieces of clothes and plastic bags on a forested slope in the army-protected Shivapuri National Park, 15 km north of Katmandu. "People might have been killed somewhere else and buried or cremated here, or they might have been brought and killed here," said Gauri Pradhan, who visited the site as a member of the government's National Human Rights Commission. *Reuters*

Family abuse kills 32 old people in Japan

TOKYO—More than 30 old people in Japan died due to abuse by family members in the year to March, the government said in a report. Half the 32 victims were murdered, six died due to violence and 10 because of neglect, all by family members who were taking care of them, the welfare ministry said. Sons were to blame for 10 of the deaths, said the report released on Wednesday. Over half the victims were women, with seven women being killed by their husbands, it said. *Reuters*

SPORTS

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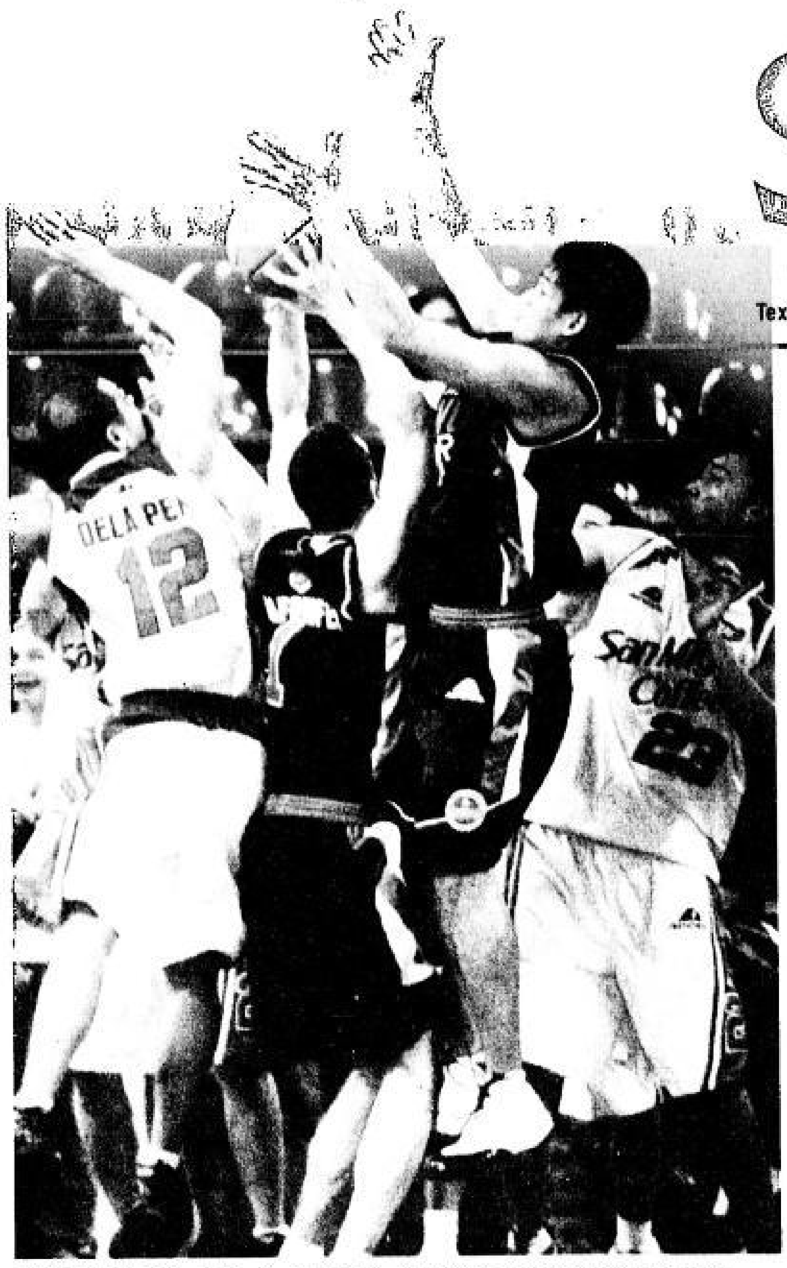
WHAT'S INSIDE
Pistons halt Celts; Mavs shade Suns /A29



SAN MIG Coffee's Kevin dela Peña (left) tries to thwart Harbour Centre's Rico Maierhofer in yesterday's semifinal game. RODEL ROTONI

Hapee still unbeaten; San Mig Coffee scores

By Jasmine W. Payo

REED JUNTILLA BURIED A TRIPLE WITH one-tenth of a second left as Hapee sustained its phenomenal run with a thrilling 83-80 triumph over Toyota Balintawak in the PBL semifinal opener yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Juntilla's only basket in the final period extended the Complete Protectors' winning streak to 10 games and pushed them within a win of a championship berth in the V-Go Extreme Energy Drink Cup.

"Our first option was (Gabe) Norwood, but he wasn't open and Juntilla was our second option," said coach Jun Noel of Hapee's winning play.

"The breaks were on our side. But we were very pressured. I'd be a hypocrite if I didn't say we were not pressured. It's hard to sustain a winning run."

The late additions continued to shine earlier as San Mig Coffee stunned outright semifinalist Harbour Centre, 80-72, in Game 1 of their own best-of-three series.

Pong Escobal—a post-elimination recruit along with San Beda teammates Sam Ekwe and Ogie Menor—fired 23 points as the Coffee Kings threatened to end Batang Pier's three-conference reign.

Hapee blew a 19-point cushion, 54-35, and seemed headed for an extra period when JV Casio nailed a triple with 2.9 seconds remaining to knot the contest at 80-all.

"We took a break for almost three weeks and it showed. We were rusty," said Noel after the Complete Protectors overcame a near-meltdown to surpass the nine-game winning streak set by the 1998 Tanduay squad.

Larry Rodriguez, Mark Borboran and Norwood kept the Complete Protectors in the game as the Road Kings rallied in the last seven minutes behind Erwin Sta. Maria and Erick Rodriguez.

The Coffee Kings pulled away from a 64-64 deadlock with Ekwe nailing a side jumper, fol-

HAPEE/ A28

GAMES TOMORROW
(The Arena, San Juan)
2 p.m.—Hapee vs Toyota Balintawak
4 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs San Mig Coffee

Games medalists get bonuses today

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MOLINA: Four golds

THEIR SIXTH-place overall finish notwithstanding, the national athletes will still get their bonuses for securing a medal in the recent 24th Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

No less than President Macapagal-Arroyo will award the medal incentives amounting to P10.3 million to 228 athletes who shone in the Thailand SEA Games, where the defending champion Philippines finished sixth in the 11-nation field.

Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez said the Chief Executive will welcome the athletes at 1:30 p.m. at the Heroes Hall, where she also sent them off for the SEA Games last month.

"The President requested the release of the funds from the Pagcor (Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.) so we can give the incentives before Christmas," Ramirez said yesterday.

He also hinted that the President might also give out additional incentives on top of what is stipulated in the Republic Act 9064. The law rewards individual gold medalists P100,000 each, silver medalists P50,000 and bronze-medal winners P10,000.

Coaches and team gold winners will also be given incentives based on the formula stipulated in the law, Ramirez said.

The 2007 SEA Games Male Athlete of the Year Miguel Molina is the most successful Filipino in the competition. He won four swimming gold medals, including one in 4x100m medley relay.

After winning 113 golds the last time, the Philippines only managed 41 in Thailand on top of 91 silver and 96 bronze medals. It was the country's worst finish since 1977.

OVERTIME ON THE DANCE FLOOR
SAN MIG LIGHT PRESENTS
DAYBREAK
THE LONGEST EVER DANCE PARTY IN MANILA
MAHABA [illegible] MAHABA-HA[illegible]NG [illegible]
FEATURING UK'S LEGENDARY HOUSE DJ PETE HELLER
[illegible]
DECEMBER 28, 2007 FROM [illegible] TO [illegible], AT THE MC HOME DEPOT ROOFTOP, THE FORT
PARTY FROM 9PM TO 6AM TO GET A CHANCE TO WIN COOL PRIZES SUCH AS A NEW KIA PICANTO, APPLE MACBOOK, SAMSUNG MOBILE PHONES AND K3 MP3 PLAYERS, NOOKA WATCHES, AND SEA AIR TICKETS TO ANY DESTINATION IN THE PHILIPPINES.
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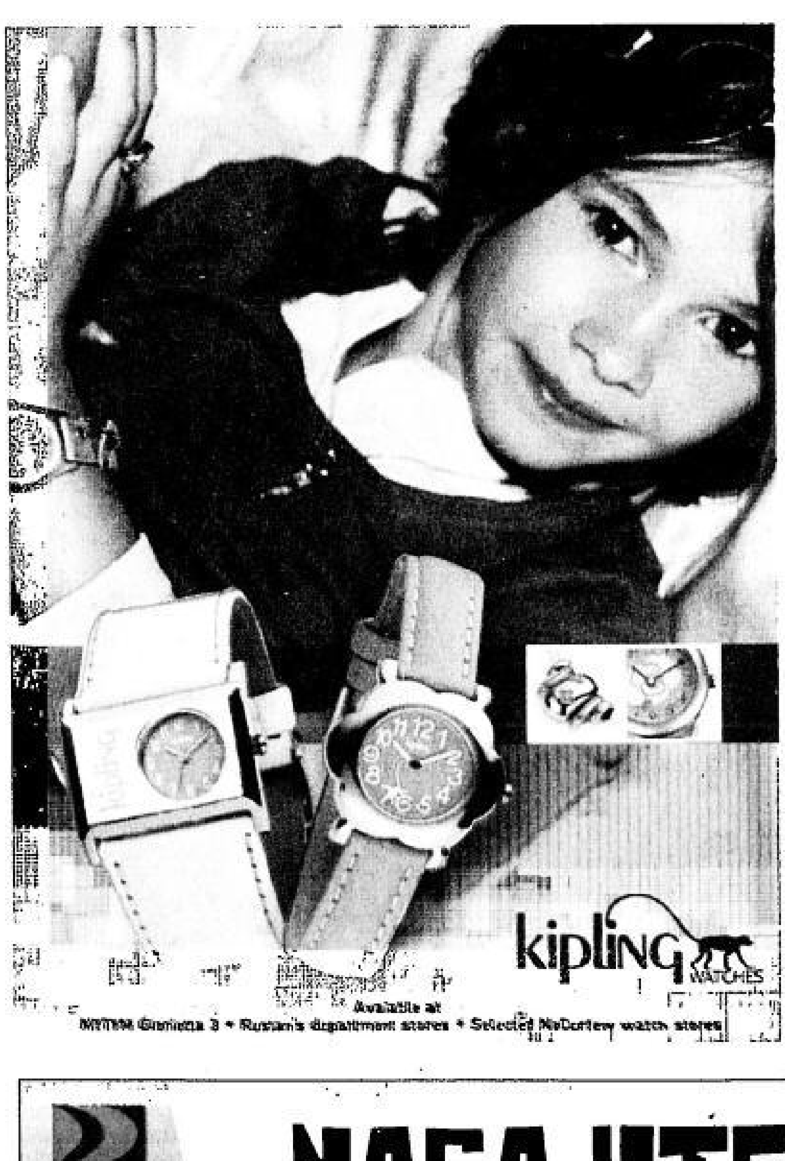

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Bowling coaches step down; chief may follow suit

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE BOWLING, BATTERED and humbled in the recent 24th Southeast Asian Games, is set to undergo a total revamp that might start at the top.

Philippine Bowling Congress president Steve Hontiveros yesterday said he is willing to step down even as he announced that his coaches Caloy de Leon, Jean Canaleta and Madoka Amano are considered automatically resigned after failing to land at least one gold during the SEA Games.

"I'm willing to step down," said Hontiveros, whose bowlers left for the biennial meet on a controversial note following the late replacement of two players, who won in the last SEA Games in Manila.

"If someone is willing to take my place, I will step down," added Hontiveros, who has been an on-and-off PBC president since 1986. His latest term will end on January 2009.

Hontiveros and the PBC board booted out defending SEA Games men's Masters champion Markwin Tee and Joonee Gatchalian, who ruled the men's doubles in 2005 with CJ Suarez, for being "uncoachable" several days before the team's departure for Bangkok.

Their slots were taken up by reserves Benshir Layoso and Tyrone Ongpauco.

Hontiveros, also the POC secretary general, defended the move then, saying it was a necessary "gamble."

It was a gamble that backfired with only Biboy Rivera and Liza del Rosario preventing a more humiliating medal shutout as they salvaged a silver in the mixed doubles.

The Philippines bagged four gold medals and six silvers during the 2005 edition here only to end up without a medal in the 2006 Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

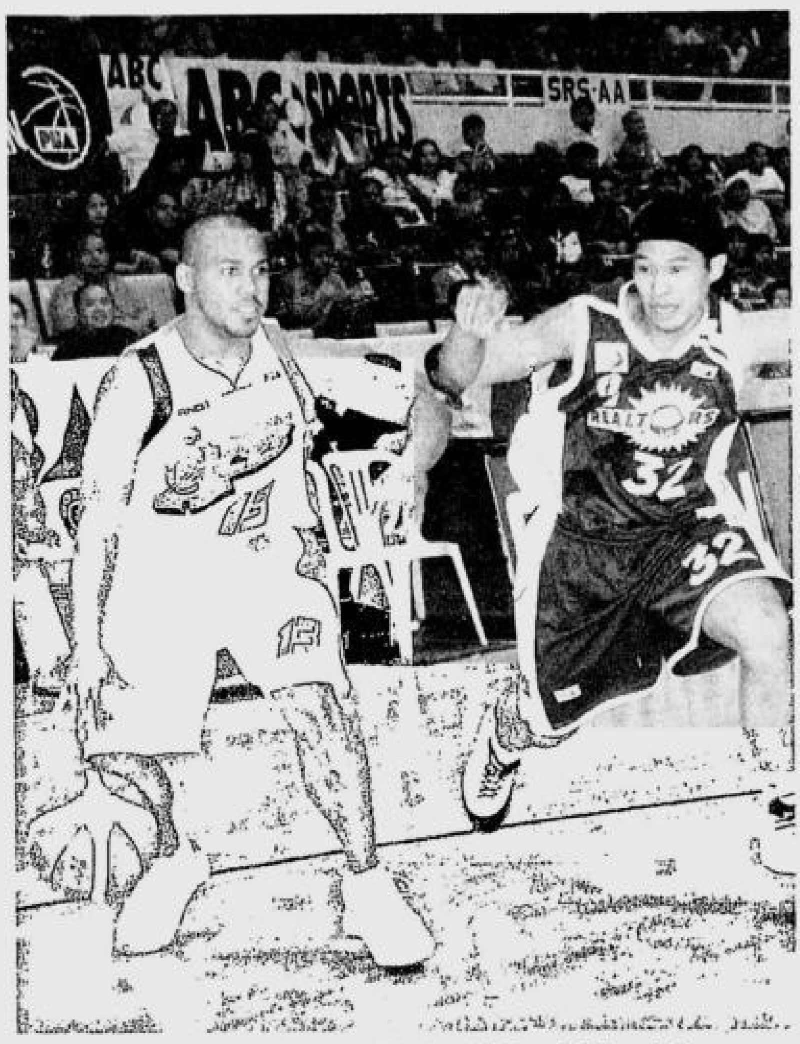
"*Lahat ginawa ko na, lahat sinugal ko na* (I have done everything, I have risked everything)," Hontiveros told said. "Now we need to upgrade our coaches."

The rest of the national team players were also dropped from the list, according to Hontiveros, except for Rivera and del Rosario.

Hontiveros said he had an agreement with the national coaches that they would have to step down if the bowlers failed to achieve the team's target of at least one gold and one silver in the biennial SEA Games.

He said he would ask the PBC to recommend a new coaching staff, adding that a foreign coach will be hired to train the local mentors.

The decision to remove Tee and Gatchalian created a furor from the bowling community in the wake of reports that there was no quorum when the PBC dropped the ax on the two veteran internationalists.



ALASKA'S Willie Miller drives past Sta. Lucia's Dennis Miranda in Wednesday night's game at Cuneta Astrodome. The Realtors won, 101-96.

Rampaging Tigers take on Kings today

ASI TAULAVA HAS AMAZED EVERYBODY by bringing Coca-Cola back into contention. Now, every team is beginning to fear this ferocious Tiger in the final stretch of the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup elimination round.

Barangay Ginebra will try to succeed where others have failed when the Gin Kings battle Taulava and the inspired Tigers at 7:20 p.m. today at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"It's (Coke) an entirely different team with Asi in it," said Barangay Ginebra coach Jong Uichico. "With four straight wins, you definitely cannot mess around with them."

The Welcoat Dragons, whose seventh straight defeat was inflicted by the Tigers, will take on Red Bull in the first game at 4:50 p.m. with the Bulls hoping to bounce back from a disappointing loss against the Sta. Lucia Realtors last week.

With bigman Jay-R Reyes and playmaker Froilan Baguion still on the injury list, it will be another tall order for the Dragons, who are in the cellar at 3-11.

Expecting the return of Cyrus Baguio from sick bay, the Bulls are seeking to improve their second-running 8-5 record and move closer to the leading Purefoods TJ Giants (11-3).

With Asi sure to be the central figure in Ginebra's battleplan, the defending champions will have to draw the best that frontliners Eric Menk, Billy Mamaril and Rafi Reavis could offer.

Taulava's intensity and double-double output have been rubbing off on the Tigers, who are now just a full game behind Ginebra's 6-8 record at seventh spot.

The Tigers are 4-1 since acquiring the 2003 MVP from the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals.

"The team's character brought us here. But how to sustain it despite the recent success is our primary concern right now," said Coca-Cola coach Binky Favis, whose Tigers are 1-7 before Taulava arrived.

Surrounded by a young crew featuring Alex Cabagnot, rookie Ronjay Buenafe and Chester Tolomia, Taulava seems to have found a second wind in his playing career.

"When my performance dipped (at Talk 'N Text), I thought it was over," said Taulava. "But coach Favis gave me another chance and I felt like a rookie again."

June Navarro

STANDINGS	W	L
Purefoods	11	3
Red Bull	8	5
Sta. Lucia	8	6
Talk N Text	8	6
Alaska	8	6
Magnolia	7	7
Ginebra	6	8
Coca-Cola	5	8
Air21	5	9
Welcoat	3	11

GAMES TOMORROW
(*Cuneta Astrodome*)
4:50 p.m.—Welcoat vs Red Bull
7:20 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Barangay Ginebra

ATENEO-LA SALLE GOLF DUEL

Looks like it's Green anew

By Musong R. Castillo

TAGAYTAY—"LOOKS LIKE MONEY in the bank."

This was how La Salle skipper Freddie Mendoza described his team's chances last night after the Archers scored an 8-4 win to pull farther away from the Ateneo Eagles in their Ryder Cup-style duel at the rolling Tagaytay Midlands here.

La Salle, bidding to win for the third straight year, now has a 16.5-7.5 lead going into today's final 18 singles matches, and Mendoza, anticipating victory, promised to "start strong so that we can finish early."

Miko Alejandro sustained his hot form, partnering Justine Limjap to two contrasting wins yesterday. They came back from 2 down with five holes to play against Yoyong Velez and Jovi Neri and prevailed, 1-up, in in the morning foursomes.

Alejandro, a standout for Southwoods in the PAL Interclub and Fil-Am tournaments, and Limjap then ripped the Iggy Clavecilla and Manoling Chan pair in the afternoon, 4 and 3.

"It looks like money in the bank already," Mendoza declared after watching the final match, a deadlock between Ateneo's Gab Atienza and John Gobong and La Salle's Francis Gaston and Raffy Garcia that ended in darkness.

"We have the momentum and we wouldn't want to give them (Eagles) a chance, that's why we will start strong (today)."

Mendoza said he will have Tommy Manotoc, King Stehmeier, Raffy Garcia, Alejandro, Limjap, JP Reyes and Anya Tanpinco come out for the singles early so that the Archers could get the required final five points quick.

Manotoc, the 58-year-old former Asia-Pacific Seniors champion, did not play for La Salle yesterday as Mendoza opted to reserve him for singles play.

"There will be no room for us to relax, even with such a lead," Manotoc said. "Until the final point has been clinched, there is no such thing as a sure thing in this match up."

Stehmeier and Marco Olivez also scored one of the most lopsided routs in the event, a 6-and-5 thumping of the Jeric Hechanova-Anthony Fernando pair.

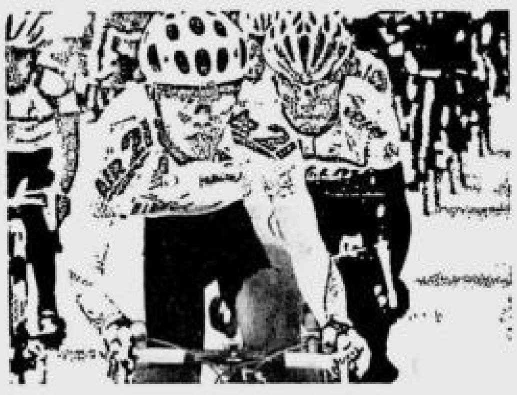
One other match featuring Ateneo's Jun Jun Plana and Mari Hechanova against Bones Floro and Sammy Sy ended in a tie.

Other than that, it was green all the way with La Salle winning a total of three foursome matches and losing just one for a 4-2 score in the morning, which the Archers duplicated in the afternoon.

Marcel Puyat and Marty Ilagan, a team that won two matches for Ateneo on Wednesday, split their assignment yesterday by winning over Chucky Hong and Miko Yee, 5 and 4, in the afternoon.

MIKO Alejandro powers to two victories with Justine Limjap. - ERIK ARAZAS

RP cyclists show way in Tour of Thailand



VICTOR Espiritu paces RP riders.

THE VICTOR ESPIRITU-LED NAtional road cycling team that missed winning the gold medal in the recent 24th Southeast Asian Games in Nakhon Ratchasima, looked poised to rule the six-stage 2007 Tour of Thailand.

After the 214.10-kilometer fourth stage marked by a 1,200-meter climb in northern Thailand, the nationals led the overall general classification with an accumulated time of 44 hours, nine minutes and 24 seconds.

Japan's A team was second with a 44:13:01 clocking and Thailand A third with 44:17:08.

A total of 17 teams started in the Union Cycliste Internationale-sanctioned race but after Wednesday's fourth stage, only 13 remain.

Teams from Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands and Slovakia were among the starters in the multistage race that is the signature cycling competition of Thailand.

Boosting the nationals' campaign were the second-place finishes of rookie internationalist Irish Valenzuela in the first stage and veteran Warren Davadilla in the second stage.

Lloyd Reynante and Ronald Gorantes are the other members of the PhilCycling team coached by Jomel Lorenzo and assisted by Dindo Quirimit and Dante Valdes.

The nationals only have to keep their poise in the final two stages Thursday and Friday to emerge as overall general classification and Asean team champions.

Hapee stays unbeaten . . .

From page A27

lowed by Glenn Bolocon's back-to-back baskets for a 70-64 advantage with 2:58 left.

"I'm very thankful for San Beda for allowing them to play for us; Sam made our defense happen with his presence in the shaded lane," said San Mig coach Koy Banal.

Solomon Mercado shot 33 points, but the Harbour Centre Fil-American drew support only from Rico Maierhofer as the Coffee Kings surged ahead at 75-66 in the closing minutes.

"Defense gave us a big lift," said Banal. "Although Mercado had a career game, we were able to shut down the other guys."

Escobal also contributed six rebounds and four assists, while Ekwe finished with 15 markers and 11 boards.

Veteran forward Neil Rañeses also got in the scoring mix in the second half, shooting 14 points along with 11 rebounds, three assists and a pair of steals.

The scores:

First Game

SAN MIG COFFEE 80—Escobal 23, Ekwe 16, Rañeses 14, Bolocon 10, Custodio 7, Dela Peña 3, Arao 2, Menor 2, Pascual 2, Saldua 1.

HARBOUR CENTRE 72—Mercado 33, Maierhofer 15, Ababou 6, Tang 6, Asoro 4, Malabanan 4, Vergara 2, Cañizares 2, Fernandez 0, Gaco 0, Gamboa 0, Gonzales 0.

Quarters: 24-21, 38-37, 54-50, 80-72

Second Game

HAPEE 83—Rodriguez 17, Borboran 14, Norwood 14, Juntilla 11, Daa 7, Hermida 6, Mercado 6, Quinday 4, Hugnatan 4, Espirtu 0, Grijaldo 0, Viray 0, Saguindel 0.

TOYOTA BALINTAWAK 80—Sta. Maria 21, Jaime 12, Rodriguez 10, Casio 9, Villanueva 7, Jazul 6, Faundo 4, Hayes 4, Dedicatoria 4, Aldave 3, Cole 0, Balgos 0, Sena 0, Guerrero 0.

Quarters: 15-12, 39-35, 66-50, 83-80

START
96
966
186
104
219
60
969

WELLNESS RUN: Runners prepare for the starter's gun in the recent "Run A Life of Wellness" race at the Fort Bonifacio Grandstand. The organizing Healthway Medical held 5K and 10K races for 300 runners that raised funds for the Citizenship by Good Example Foundation. The fun run highlighted the HMC Inc.'s 10th anniversary celebration.

SPORTSWATCH

35 amateur fights highlight yearend PCSO boxing sked

THE YEAR-END SCHEDULE OF THE PCSO Amateur Boxing Series reels off tomorrow morning at the Cantada Sports Center in Taguig City.

The one-day event, held every two months, will feature amateur boxers in 35 matches topbilled by national team boxers who participated in the recent 24th Southeast Asian Games in Bangkok.

Male and female boxers will show their wares in the event supervised by the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines headed by Manny Lopez, organized by Joe Cantada Sports and supported by the PCSO through its GM Rosario Uriarte and PR manager Manny Garcia. Sponsors include Tanduay, Toyota Balintawak and Mapecon.

Pasay 'Pasko' derby kicks off with 80-plus matches

MORE THAN 80 MATCHES ARE ON THE roster in the annual "Pasko Na Sa Pasay" 4-cock derby which gets going at 4 p.m. today at the Pasay City Cockpit.

Pit managers Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano said among the favorites in the derby that offers a guaranteed prize of P400,000 are Patrick Antonio, Manny Pacquiao, Pepito Ngo, Roger Segismundo, William Co, Lito Orillaza, Louie Cua, Gerry Ramos, Alex Tobias, Nene Aguilar, Butch Nunez, Benjie Lim, Osang dela Cruz, Gov. Ito Ynares, Dicky Gonzales, JV Magsaysay, Ramon Mancenares and Lito Roque.

Last call for entries in P4-M Makati 'Salpukan' 6-cocker

COCKERS AND BREEDERS, ESPECIALLY those from the provinces, have one last chance to join the "Pamaskong Salpukan" 6-cock derby, a P4 million event being held at the Makati Coliseum.

Entries must be presented today at the coliseum office from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 8963545 or 8956475.

As of yesterday, 246 participants have competed in the qualifying rounds. The finals will be held on Dec. 26 and 29.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Tri)—Kaiphia's Gold (5), Holy Ridge (2), Frolic (3)

Race 2—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Remus (10), Chabacana (9), Red Storm (5), Look of Love/Incorruptible (6), Aim And Fire (4), Iron Chef/Princess Sophia (2)

Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Gainable (8), Style Icon/Conjugal Bullet (1), Sports Illustrated (2), Royal Lady Jane (3), Sail & Sign/Glance Of The Wind (7)

Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—City of Dreams/Imperial Ballet (3), Queen Elene (6), Go Dream Go (4), Royal King (5)

Race 5—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Spin Cycle (7), Princess of Aachen (4), Bush Carnival (1), Body Shot (6), Crowning Glory (5), Spanish Ruler (9)

Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Drama Belle (7), Zoe's Lass (4), Jaded Dancer (5), Bilingaling (3)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Kate Alex (8), Batang Bukid (3), Hugadera (6), Wakinyan (10), Beautiful Jaeda (7)

Race 8—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Gonfalon Story/Blue Sheikh (6), Field Star (1), Ocean Cookie (4), Jay Nicole (9), Tower of Strength (8)

Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Highchairconfusion (3), Please Do (1), Iron Heart (6), Flying Jojie (4), Lady Line (9), Hello Jeanette (8)

Former IOC chief rushed to hospital after fainting

MADRID—FORMER INTERNATIONAL Olympic Committee (IOC) president Juan Antonio Samaranch will spend the night in hospital after collapsing at a promotional event in the Spanish capital on Wednesday.

Medical staff said the 87-year-old had responded well to treatment after fainting because of an increase in arterial blood pressure.

"The patient's situation remains stable and controlled," said Doctor Raquel del Valle of the cardiology department at the Clinico hospital.

"As a consequence, and in agreement with the family, we will not be issuing another report until tomorrow."

Witnesses reported that Samaranch was rushed to hospital after fainting shortly before he was due to attend the presentation of a fund-raising event organized by Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas and tennis player Rafael Nadal.

Samaranch was head of the IOC between 1980 and 2001 and is now an honorary life president of the organization.

He remains an active figure in Spanish and international sports administration and is often present at high-profile events such as Wednesday's presentation. He was in Lausanne last week at an IOC Executive Board meeting.

Samaranch spent several weeks in hospitals in Lausanne and Barcelona after suffering from fatigue shortly after stepping down as IOC president in 2001. *Reuters*

Mundine stakes WBA crown vs Hamdan Feb. 27

MUNDINE

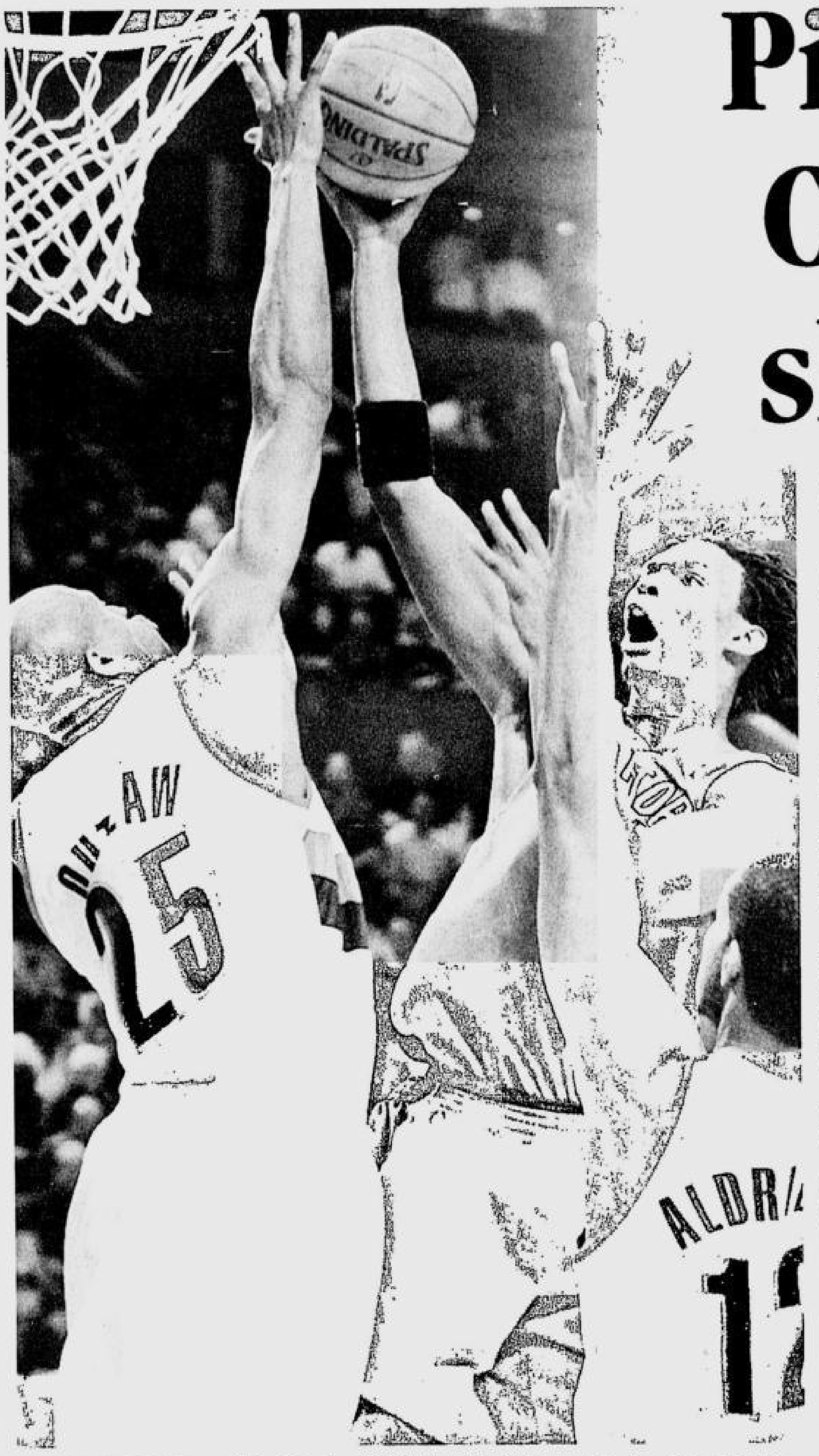
SYDNEY—ANTHONY Mundine said Thursday he will defend his WBA super-middleweight world title against fellow Australian Nader Hamdan here on Feb. 27.

Mundine, who won his second title defense against Argentine Jose Alberto Clavero by fourth round knockout here on Dec. 12, has won 30 fights (23 by knockout) with three defeats.

Hamdan, 33, has lost three of his last five fights to take his record to 40-5.

Hamdan has never had a crack at a world title in his 10-year professional career, but Mundine insists his mate is "the real deal."

"I wouldn't take a fight if I thought he was going to be another easy opponent," Mundine said Thursday. *AFP*


PORTLAND Trail Blazers' Travis Outlaw (left) foils a drive by Toronto Raptors' Chris Bosh in their NBA game Dec. 19. At right is LaMarcus Aldridge. REUTERS

Allen eyes return after 2-game absence due to sore right ankle

BOSTON—RAY ALLEN SAID HE HOPED to return to the Boston Celtics lineup Wednesday after missing two games with a sore right ankle.

Allen said he originally got the injury Nov. 24 in Charlotte when he rolled the ankle late in the fourth quarter. The guard said he tried to play through the pain, but took a seat when the lingering discomfort started to affect his jump shot.

Allen shot around in practice Tuesday, but did not fully participate in the workout. He planned to test the ankle again in a shootaround prior to Boston's home game against the Detroit Pistons.

Allen, acquired in a draft day trade with Seattle, is the second-leading scorer for the Celtics (20-2), averaging 19.2 points.

Pistons halt Celts; Mavs shade Suns

Grizzlies prevail as Spurs sputter

BOSTON—CHAUNCEY BILLUPS HIT TWO FREE THROWS WITH A tenth of a second left to lead the Detroit Pistons to an 87-85 win over the Boston Celtics on Wednesday.

The loss was Boston's first at home this season having won their first 12 home games.

The Pistons held off a late Boston rally and won the game when Billups converted his free throws after being fouled by Tony Allen.

"It was playoff-intense, pretty aggressive out there," Detroit coach Flip Saunders told reporters. "I would say, by far, it was the most aggressive game this season, with all five guys going against each other.

"It got a little bit chippy, so it was a little bit of a playoff-like atmosphere."

Detroit led 85-79 with 3:34 to play but Eddie House and Ray Allen hit three-pointers to tie the game.

Pierce missed fadeaway

The score was level until the final seconds, when Paul Pierce missed a fadeaway that would have given the Celtics the lead.

Rasheed Wallace grabbed the rebound and called a timeout with 1.7 seconds left. On the inbound, Allen fouled Billups, leading to the winning free throws.

Billups had a game-high 28 points, including 12 in the fourth quarter, and added eight assists.

Richard Hamilton added 21 points and Wallace nine points and 13 rebounds for the Pistons.

Kevin Garnett led Boston with 26 points and 12 rebounds and Ray Allen added 24 points. Despite being the losing team, Boston had 49 percent possession to Detroit's 40 percent.

"It's a good lesson for our guys," Boston coach Doc Rivers said.

Detroit (18-7), the Central Division leaders, won its third successive game.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 31 points when the Dallas Mavericks hung on to edge ahead of the Phoenix Suns, 108-105, in the latest showdown between the two Western Conference rivals.

The New York Knicks defeated the Cleveland Cavaliers, 108-90, with LeBron James grabbing 32 points, eight rebounds and six assists for the Cavaliers, who have lost nine of their last 11 games.

Mourning knee injury

The Atlanta Hawks outlasted the slumping Miami Heat to win, 117-111, in overtime. The Heat have been defeated in eight of their past 11 games and lost Alonzo Mourning due to a knee injury.

The Charlotte Bobcats rallied from a 12-point deficit with six minutes left to beat the Utah Jazz, 98-92.

Gerald Wallace had 26 points to lead Charlotte.

The San Antonio Spurs lost their third successive road game when Rudy Gay hit a three-pointer over Tim Duncan as the final buzzer sounded, lifting the Memphis Grizzlies past the Spurs, 88-85.

Dwight Howard had 21 points, 11 rebounds and three blocks when the Orlando Magic beat the Houston Rockets, 97-92.

Yao Ming had 19 points and 17 rebounds for the Rockets, who lost Tracy McGrady with a knee injury after the first half. *Reuters*

Ruangkit pulls ahead with 64; Que 6 shots off in E San Open

NONGKHAI, THAILAND—DEFENDING champion Boonchu Ruangkit renewed his love affair with the E San Open on Wednesday with a blistering seven-under-par 64 to lead by two strokes after the first round.

The 51-year-old Thai shot a career-best 59 on his way to victory at the par-71 Victory Park Golf and Country Club last year and quickly reasserted his authority.

Boonchu is two shots ahead of Thaworn Wiratchant, a former Asian number one, and promising 21-year-old Kwanchai Tannin, both of Thailand.

Filipino Angelo Que was the lone foreigner in contention following a 70.

RUANGKIT: Still hot at 51

The home dominance on day one was completed by Prayad Marksaeng, the winner of the recent Masters of Asia, and Metee Siripot, who are a further shot adrift after opening 67s.

The $50,000 Singha E San Open is the fifth leg of the fledgling Asean Golf Tour aimed at providing more playing opportunities for Southeast Asian golfers.

Leading scores: a denotes amateur): 64 - Boonchu Ruangkit (Tha); 66—Thaworn Wiratchant (Tha), Kwanchai Tannin (Tha); 67 - Prayad Marksaeng (Tha), Metee Siripot (Tha); 68—Wittawat Saeung (Tha), Udom Duangdecha (Tha); 70—Atthaphon Prathummanee (Tha), Angelo Que (RP), Thanachot Tandavas (Tha) (a), Nakul Vijityuthasart (Tha), Sattaya Supupramai (Tha), Nat Putta (Tha) (a), Pongthep Jaewchumnanchao (Tha), Siriwiwat Meesawat (Tha), Thanyawat Sanpot (Tha), Apichat Papituk (Tha) (a) *AFP*

JOHN McENROE reacts after winning against fellow former superstar Boris Becker at the Masters of Legends tennis tournament in Duesseldorf, Germany, Wednesday. McEnroe won the one set match in the tiebreak. AP

More events, bigger money for Asian golf tour

LIANG: Player of the Year

MIÑOZA: Notable performance

SINGAPORE—ASIAN GOLF HAD ANOTHER stellar year in 2007, with tournaments growing in stature and crowds flocking to catch a glimpse of an increasing number of top name stars.

The region played host to 31 tournaments over the course of the year, nine of them co-sanctioned with the European Tour.

Three of them—Singapore Open, HSBC Champions and the World Cup—offered in excess of $ 4million in prize money as sponsors continued to pump cash into the fast-growing sport.

Winners in Asia in 2007 read like a who's who of world golf—Phil Mickelson, Retief Goosen, Vijay Singh, Angel Cabrera, Miguel Angel Jimenez—as the trickle of big names playing on the continent turned into a flood.

But there was also success for Asian Tour regulars, with stalwarts like the Philippines' Frankie Miñoza, India's Jyoti Randhawa, and Thailand's Thaworn Wiratchant all scoring victories.

In all, there were 28 different winners with only Taiwan's Lu Wen-teh lifting more than one trophy—the Macau Open and the Taiwan Masters. Scotland won the World Cup team event.

But it was Liang Wen-chong who outshone them all, winning the European-sanctioned Singapore Masters and posting eight other top-10s to become the first man from China to win the Order of Merit title. He was also voted the Players' Player of the Year.

Thailand's Chapchai Wirat also won a European co-sanctioned tournament (TCL Classic), as did South Africa's Anton Haig (Johnnie Walker Classic), giving them playing rights in Europe.

The man who continued to be the pace-settter for Asia though was K.J Choi of South Korea, who burst into the world's top 10 for the first time with two victories on the US PGA Tour.

Bigger and better things are planned for next year, including a bumper three weeks in November where $17.25M will be up for grabs in four tourneys. *AFP*

Sadorra bows to top-seeded GM

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6.0 points—C. Sandipan (India); 5.5—Zhang Z (Singapore), Z. Azmaiparashvili (Georgia); 5.0—**J. Sadorra (RP)**, Dao T.H. (Vietnam), Wu S. (Singapore), R. Laxman (India); 4.5—**E. Paciencia (RP)**, S. Megaranto (Indonesia), N.A. Dung (Vietnam), S. Sitranggang (Indonesia), P.D. Girinath (India); 4.0—**O. Dimakiling (RP)**, Chen L. (China), Wan Y. (China), H. Jia (China), G. Xiaobing (China), Wang L. (China); 3.5—**M. Paragua (RP)**, J. Gonzales (RP), I. Sukandar (Indonesia), A. Nadanian (Armenia), S. Siyuan (China), H. Mas (Malaysia)

SINGAPORE—GRANDMASTER-CANDIDATE JULIO CATALINO Sadorra put up another brave stand despite handling the disadvantageous black pieces before yielding to top seed GM Zhang Zhong of Singapore in the seventh round of the 2007 Singapore Masters Open chess tournament here Wednesday.

JUST TOO TOUGH: Chinese GM Zhang Zhong stays on top.

Sadorra, who kept Philippine hopes alive by drawing with erstwhile solo leader GM Zurab Azmaiparashvili of Georgia in the sixth round, crashed back to earth after losing to the top-seeded Zhang, a former member of China's national team.

The 21-year-old Sadorra, whose family is now based in this tiny island nation, absorbed his first loss after four wins and two. draws in the tough, 44-player tournament.

The Filipino champion, who earned his first GM norm during the recent third Prospero Pichay Cup international chess tournament in Parañaque City, has five points, a full point behind solo leader and third seed GM Chanda Sandipan of India and half a point behind Zhang and Azmaiprashvili.

Sandipan, the highest-rated Indian player here with an Elo of 2593, defeated compatriot IM P.D.S. Girinath in the sixth round and upset Azmaiparashvili in the seventh to hike his total to 6 points.

Zhang, who also drew with GM Susanto Megaranto of Indonesia in the sixth round, and Azmaiparashvili both have 5.5 points.

Another Singapore-based Filipino, IM Enrique Paciencia, led four others with 4.5 points.

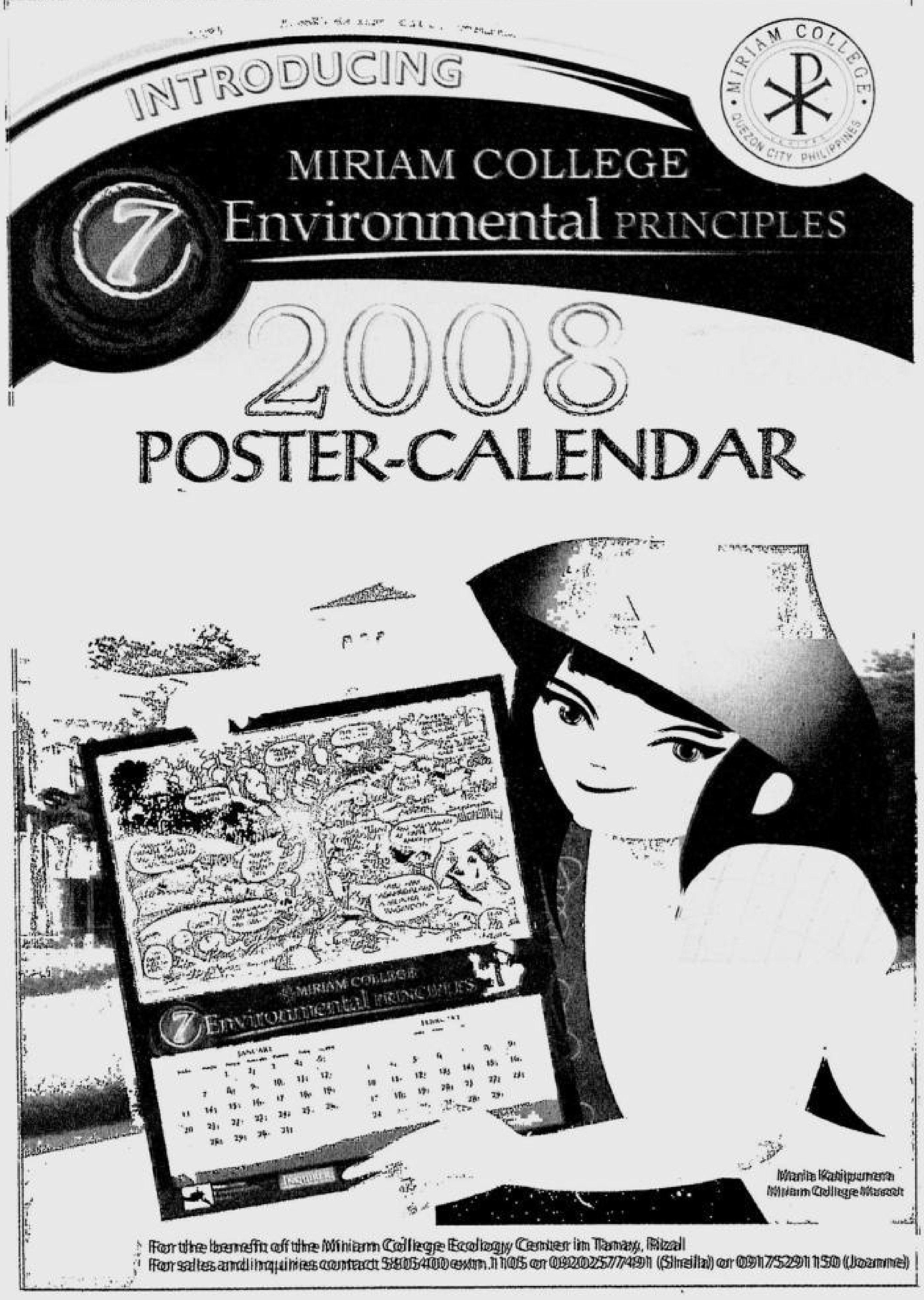
Paciencia, one of several Filipinos who migrated here to teach chess to Singapore youngsters, drew with GM Mark Paragua in the sixth round and defeated No. 18 Wan Yunguo of China in the seventh to improve to 4.5 points.

Oliver Dimakiling beat Woman GM Li Ruofan of Singapore in the sixth round but lost to Vietnam's Dao Thien Hai in the seventh round to remain with four points.

Paragua lost to IM Salor Sitanggang of Indonesia in the seventh round.

Gonzales won over fellow Filipino Rolando Andador in the sixth round but was held to a draw by IM Mas Hafizuhelmi of Malaysia in the seventh round.

In the eight round, Sadorra will play Megaranto, Paciencia will battle GM Nguyen Anh Dung of Vietnam, Dimakiling will meet Wang Li of China, Paragua will face IM Ashot Nadanian of Armenia, IM Jayson Gonzales will tackle WIM Irine Sukandar of Indonesia and Andador will test FM Graham Cua Jia of Singapore.



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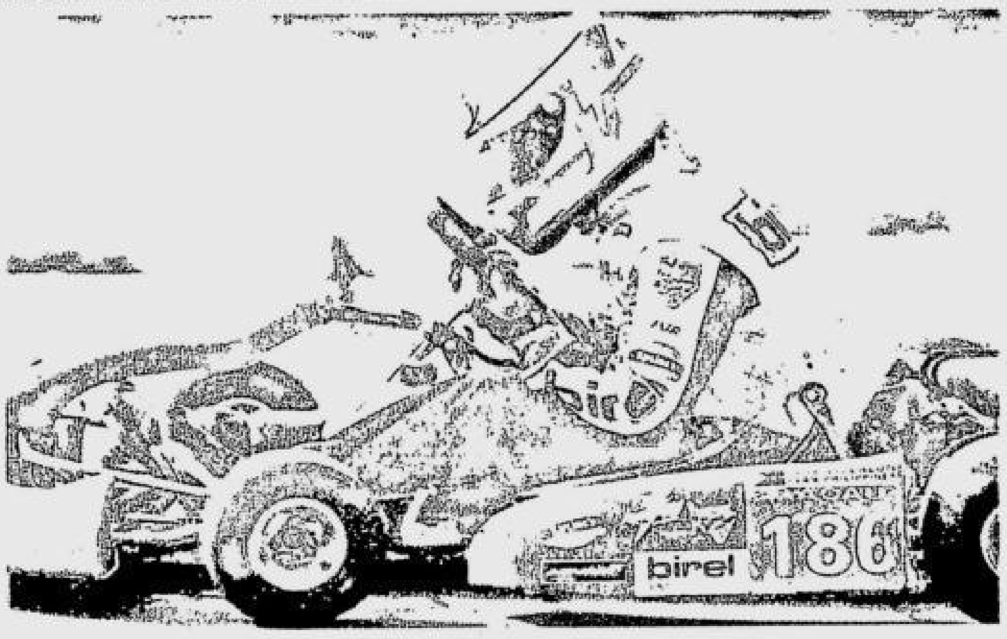

INDY Villalon floors it in the final straight to top the Yamaha Cup race in Macau. Villalon on the winners' podium (below).

Villalon rules Macau Yamaha Cup karting

MACAU—FILIPINO INDY VILLALON overcame tire problems and the unpredictable handling of a lighter machine to rule the 2008 Yamaha Cup Karting Championship at the Kartodromo de Coloane recently.

Villalon captured the checkered flag in the pre-final race and finished seventh in the finals to bag the Seniors crown over karters from Macau, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea.

Already the winner of the Formula SL Expert overall title in the 2007 Shell Karting Series back home, Villalon qualified fourth in the 21-man grid that included nine senior drivers.

A perfect start boosted Villalon of AUTS Racing right behind the leaders in the pre-final race and stayed with the lead group until the seventh lap, when he swung wide to seize the front to stay.

Although tire problems slowed him down in the final race, he managed to finish seventh, just enough to give the Filipino the needed points to secure the overall victory.

Villalon was actually seven kilograms overweight during Thursday's initial practice sessions. But after set-up adjustments eliminated the extra weight, Villalon returned to the track and posted the fastest lap of 53.838 seconds in official practice.

The maiden Yamaha Cup race was part of the championship round of the Asian Karting Open Championship-Macau Kart Prix.

Two other AUTS karters, Andres Calma and Bobby Domingo, put up creditable performances their in respective divisions.

Calma, in his first-ever overseas stint, qualified ninth in the Yamaha Junior Class against more experienced rivals while Domingo wound up third overall in the Rotax Max Senior Class, where his competitors used faster and vastly superior engines. *Steve Silva, Contributor*

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IN THIS ISSUE

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- **Gov't** subsidies to state firms up 84% to P19B /B6
- **Aboitiz** Power, Vivant form joint venture /B7

BSP slashes key rates by 25 basis pts

Widely anticipated move seen to prop up exports

By Michelle V. Remo

ENCOURAGED BY A BENIGN INFLATION ENVIRONMENT, THE Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday slashed its key policy rates by 25 basis points—a move that is seen to temper a rising peso and cushion its adverse impact on exports.

Following the decision of the central bank's Monetary Board, the BSP's overnight borrowing rate has been set at 5.25 percent, while its overnight lending rate is at 7.25 percent.

"In deciding to cut policy rates, the Monetary Board noted that the inflation outlook continues to provide scope for further monetary policy easing," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a briefing after yesterday's Monetary Board meeting.

The BSP said it had no qualms reducing its lending and borrowing rates, as the increase in consumer prices was by far still slower than programmed. Inflation hit an average of 2.7 percent in January to November, way below the official target of limiting it to between 4 and 5 percent this year.

Central bank rates influence lending rates of regular banks. A reduction in bank lending rates normally result in an increase in demand for loans and, therefore, more money in circulation. This, in turn, push aggregate demand and consumer prices upward.

The BSP's move to cut policy rates was highly anticipated by the market. Analysts said the BSP would be forced to implement a rates cut to stem the sharp rise of the peso and respond to the complaints of exporters.

A rise of the peso makes Philippine exports more expensive in dollar terms, therefore making them less competitive in the world market.

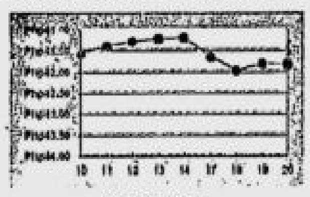
The rise of the peso is blamed partly for the slower-than-expected growth in exports this year. Export earnings grew 5.4 percent to $41.85 billion, weaker than the official exports growth target of 11 percent for the year.

Hardest hit are exporters that do not use imported raw materials for their export products, such as those from the agriculture sector. Exporters that rely heavily on imported raw materials are not as badly affected because the rise of the peso makes

BSP SLASHES/ B6

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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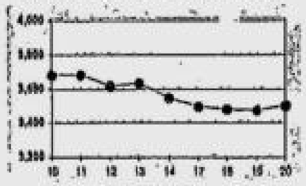
STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close 0.7% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.7 percent higher as investors scooped up bargains after a four-day downturn.

Dealers said volume was thin, reflecting prevailing caution following Wall Street's lackluster performance overnight and ahead of the Philippine central bank's decision on interest rates yesterday afternoon.

The composite index closed up 25.68 points at 3,491.96, the day's high.

The broader all-share index gained 13.41 points at 2,150.21.

There were 51 advancers and 38 decliners, while 66 stocks were unchanged.

Volume amounted to 811.3 million

SHARES/ B0

Maynilad finally secures court's nod to exit rehab

By Amy R. Remo

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES INC. has finally been given the green light to exit from corporate rehabilitation.

Judge Reynaldo Daway of the rehabilitation court approved on Dec. 19 the water firm's petition to be released from restrictions imposed under the Debt and Capital Restructuring Agreement.

With the restrictions of the DCRA lifted, Maynilad may now freely handle its finances, with which it hopes to fund water improvement projects throughout the west zone concession.

The concessionaire has been under rehabilitation since it filed for concession termination in 2003, after incurring heavy losses largely due to the 1998 Asian financial crisis.

In 2004, Maynilad had recovered and, following a bid in 2006, was acquired by DMCI-Metro Pacific consortium as part of the rehabilitation plan.

In the decision penned by Daway, the court had declared that Maynilad has successfully implemented the 2005 rehabilitation plan.

It likewise approved for implementation the Prepayment and Settlement Agreement, which Maynilad had earlier signed with its lenders and the government.

With the PSA, Maynilad is set to settle its obligations with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and its foreign loans—a requirement for Maynilad's exit from a debt restructuring agreement.

Most of these loans have payment terms of up to 2013.

Maynilad chief operating officer Herbert Consunji said with the water firm out of rehabilitation, they can now plan and make their own programs for a full takeover, while complying with the conditions of the PSA.

He added that they will now review their P8-billion capital expenditure program for 2008. Capex for 2009 had been initially set at P5 billion and, in 2010, another P5 billion.

"In particular, we want to strengthen our water asset management," Consunji said in an interview. "There are areas where we can further reduce our NRW (non-revenue water)."

The consortium earlier said it aimed to improve Maynilad's non-revenue water, or water lost from leaks, and commercial losses to 55 percent this year from the current 68 percent.

MAYNILAD/ B6

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Liability for false info

LAST DEC. 4, THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue issued Memorandum Circular No. 82-2007 redefining the responsibility of taxpayers for financial statements and tax returns signed and filed on their behalf.

Effective 2008, the BIR will hold the taxpayer responsible for the contents and representations in tax filings made under their name by their accountants or tax agents.

Corporate Securities Info

Raul J. Palabrica

The taxpayer can no longer make his tax adviser the scapegoat for discrepancies or errors that may be found in those documents.

The "blame my accountant, not me" refrain that is often used when a tax manipulation is discovered will cease to be an acceptable excuse for evading criminal liability for tax evasion.

The basic principle of agency—the principal is responsible for all acts committed by his agent within his authority—will be strictly enforced.

Whatever a tax agent does in obedience to his principal's instructions shall be considered as having been committed by the client-taxpayer himself.

In spite of the engagement of the services of a person knowledgeable on the preparation of tax reports, taxpayers will now be required to check the authenticity of tax returns and/or information statements made on their behalf, and the correctness and validity of the information contained in those documents.

Active role

The net effect of this requirement is to make the taxpayer an active participant in the preparation of his tax returns. He cannot leave that process in the hands of his tax agent.

If the taxpayer does not understand some entries in the tax forms, he is obliged to seek clarification from his agent.

The taxpayer should adopt a critical, not subservient, attitude toward the person he has hired to sort out his responsibilities with the tax authorities.

Going one step further, the BIR will hold the taxpayer liable for tax payments supposedly made on his behalf by his tax agent that were not actually received by the BIR.

The taxpayer will be barred from raising the defense that the person to whom he gave the money to pay his taxes run away with his money.

The "cuckolded" taxpayer, if such is the case, will have to cough up with additional funds to settle his tax obligation with the BIR. He can run after his dishonest agent later.

In the same circular, the BIR instructed its staff all over the country to verify and authenticate the validity and accuracy of all tax returns signed and filed by tax agents on behalf of their clients.

Penalties

If errors or violations of tax laws are uncovered in the process, the appropriate administrative, civil and criminal charges shall be filed against the erring taxpayer and tax agent.

The civil and criminal raps may take some time before they are resolved. But the administrative sanction which, for the erring accountant, could mean the loss of his accreditation with the Securities and Exchange Commission and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, will be swift.

The time-consuming processes of court litigation do not apply in administrative proceedings.

And when the accreditation is lost, the accountant concerned might as well kiss his professional career goodbye. With so many competent accountants around, the business community will not feel his absence.

There is really nothing new in the BIR's move to make the principal (or taxpayer) responsible for the acts or omissions of its agent.

This is standard practice in most government regulatory agencies that require companies whose operations they oversee to submit certain documents as part of the regular reporting process, or before they engage in activities that involve direct interaction with the public.

Signatories

The contents of financial statements submitted by listed and public companies to the SEC are required to be vouched for, by way of signatures, by their chair, president and chief financial officer.

In addition to the personal imprimatur, the statements must be subscribed before a notary public.

Once notarized, the document becomes a public document and therefore any falsehood or misrepresentation in it could make the affected party liable for perjury.

The same requirement applies to the registration statements that have to be filed by companies that want to sell securities to the public.

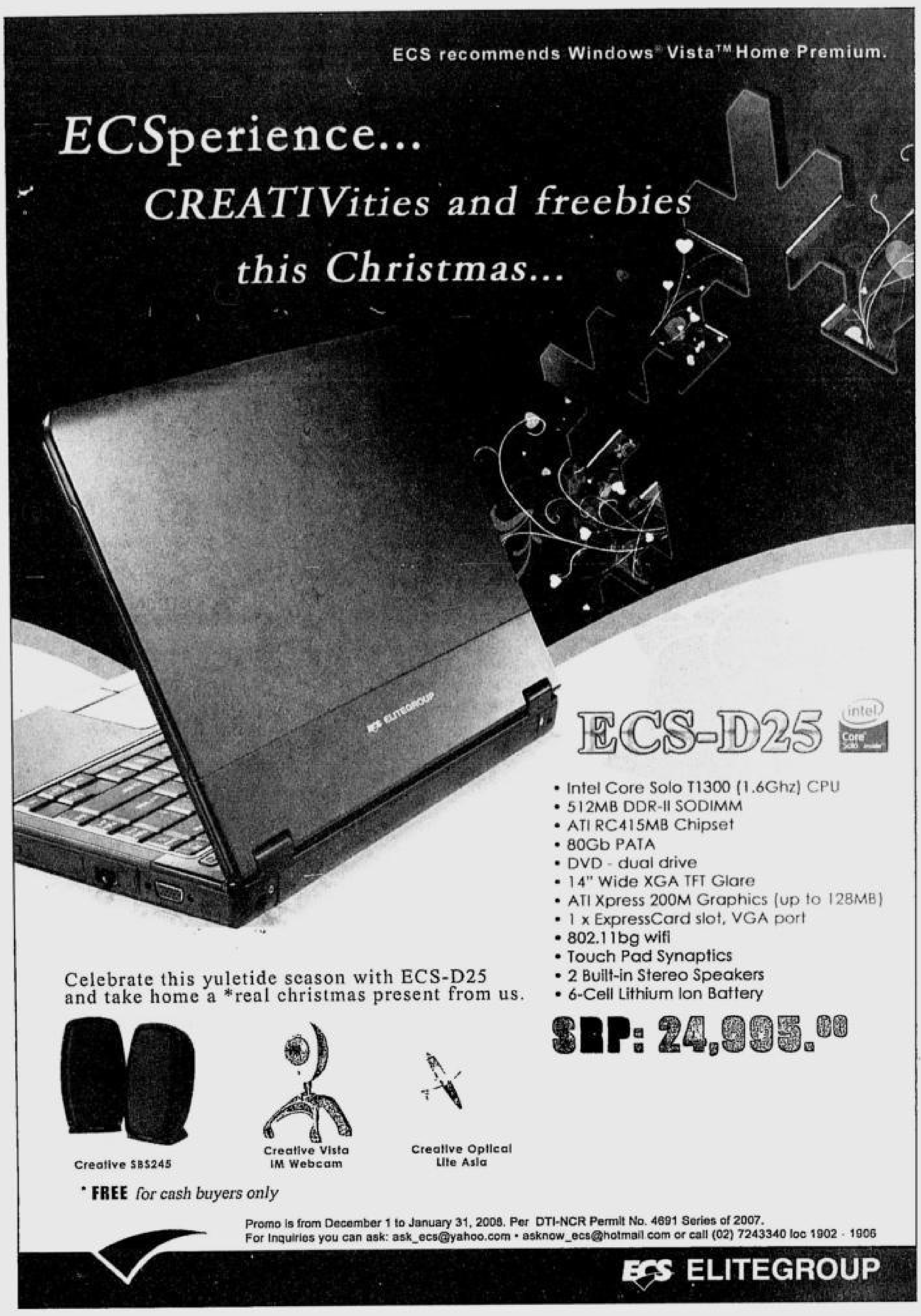
The registration statement, which should contain the significant terms of the offering, must be signed by the registrant's (... start counting) CEO, COO, CFO, controller, principal accounting officer, corporate secretary or persons performing similar functions.

If any of its contents turns out to be erroneous, misleading or untrue, their signatories could find themselves in serious trouble with the regulatory agency or any person who may have suffered monetary damages in the process.

Although these documents are prepared by their lawyers and accountants, the signatories cannot point to them to escape responsibility over the validity and accuracy of their contents.

To paraphrase the late US President Reagan's favorite statement, trust your lawyers and accountants, but verify.

(For feedback, please write to rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph)



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1. The Department of National Defense /Armed Forces of the Philippines (DND/AFP), through the Special Allotment Release Order Nr. *D-07-00818* **dtd January 18, 2007**, intends to apply the sum of ***TWO HUNDRED THIRTY TWO MILLION AND THREE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS (PhP 232,350,000.00)*** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **20W Vehicular Configuration Radio (20W VCR) Acquisition Project and its Integrated Logistic Support (ILS)**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The DND/PROCURING ENTITY now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the **20W Vehicular Configuration Radio (20W VCR) Acquisition Project**. Delivery of the GOODS is required within a period of **One Hundred Eighty (180) calendar days**. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part-A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws and regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from DND Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00AM to 5:00PM, Monday to Friday excluding holidays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (PhP 25,000.00)**. The method of payment will be on cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The DND BAC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **10 January 2008, 10:00 A.M.** at the DND Conference Room, 3rd Floor, DND Bldg., Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **24 January 2008 at 10:00 A.M.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any form and corresponding amount allowed under RA 9184 and its IRR-A. Late bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **24 January 2008 at 10:00 A.M.** at the DND Conference Room, 3rd Floor, DND Bldg., Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. Only bids from manufacturers of the aforementioned system/equipment will be entertained.
10. To facilitate eligibility checking, manufacturers and/or prospective bidders who wish to participate in the public bidding may apply for registration with the DND BAC, through the DND BAC Secretariat, at least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids for the project pursuant to DND BAC Cir 01-2005 dtd 12 May 2005 (copy of the circular can be downloaded at the website specified below).
11. The DND/AFP reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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DND Annex Building
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo
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(Sgd.) **ASEC ROBERTO G NUQUI**
Assistant Secretary for Comptrollership/
Chairman, DND BAC

(PDI - December 21, 2007)

DA puts up facility to boost ornamental fish sector

By Amy R. Remo

THE LOCAL ORNAMENTAL fish industry is poised to get a bigger share of the P45-billion global market with the Department of Agriculture's commitment to put up an export processing facility.

Helping the DA in its effort are the National Power Corp. and National Agribusiness Corp.

Under an agreement among the agencies, Napocor will house the 1-hectare ACE facility inside its Sucat thermal power plant in Muntinlupa City.

According to DA, the Sucat property has ponds and tanks that could be redesigned to accommodate the facility for ornamental aquarium fish.

The Laguna Lake, the largest freshwater lake in the country, would become the production area because of the presence of natural food for the fish.

With the export processing facility, Philippine ornamental fish will be able to adapt to new water temperatures and feeding habits once brought outside their natural habitat.

At the signing of the agreement, Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said the ACE facility would help boost the country's export market share to about 10 percent, worth P4.5 billion.

While Asian countries account for more than half of the total global supply, the Philippines' share in the global ornamental fish market is only 3.8 percent.

The country currently supplies ornamental aquarium fish, such as guppy, molly, tetra, angelfish and discus, to the United Kingdom, France, Japan, United States and Germany.

There are also plans to tap emerging markets such as Eastern Europe, China and India.

With the ACE facility, Yap said the DA, through its partnership with the Laguna Lake Development Authority and its private sector counterpart, Bioresearch, targets to supply 10 to 20 percent of the total world demand and provide some 35,000 new jobs.

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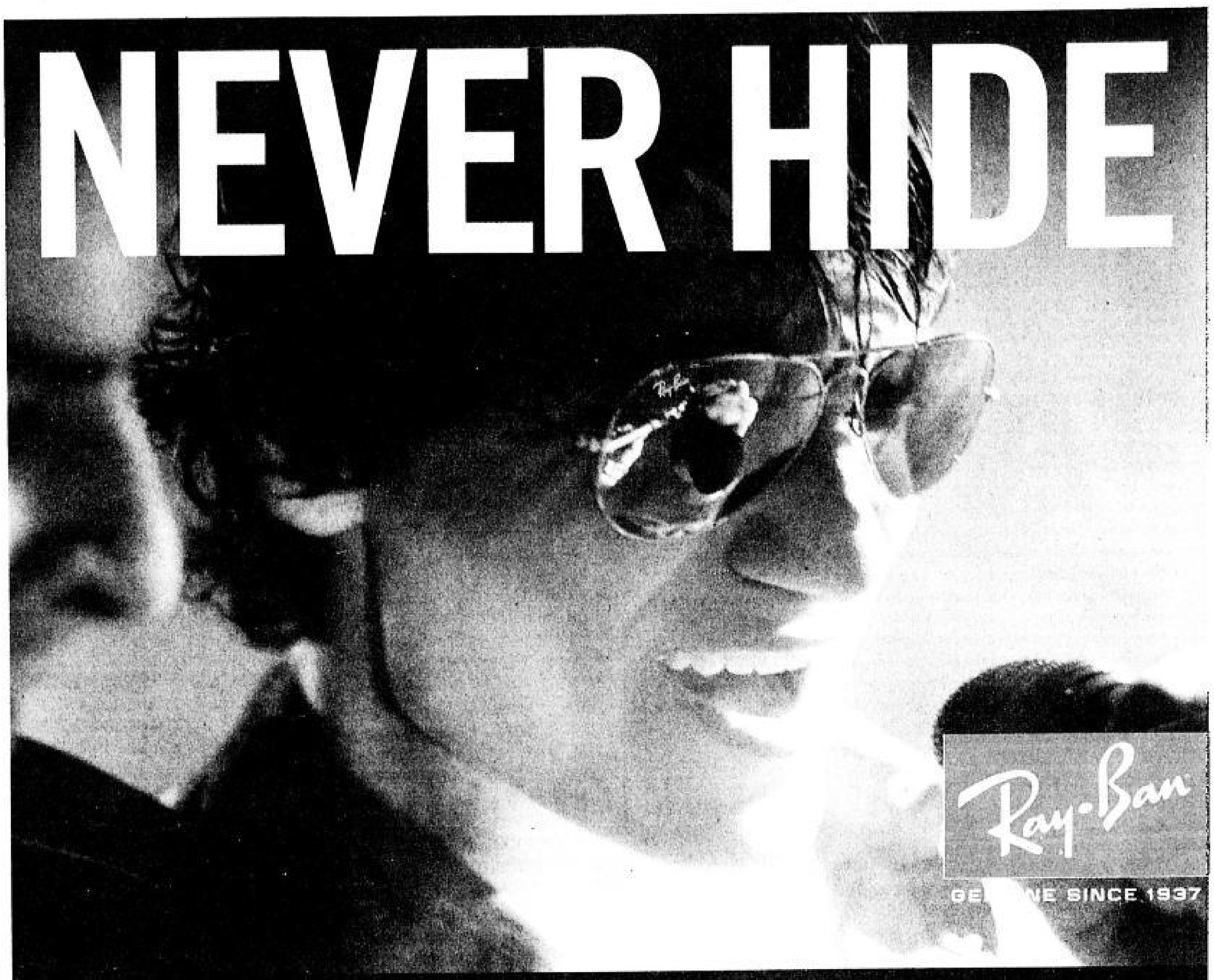
Equity Fund - Peso	0.91186	0.97339
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.4488	1.4433

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

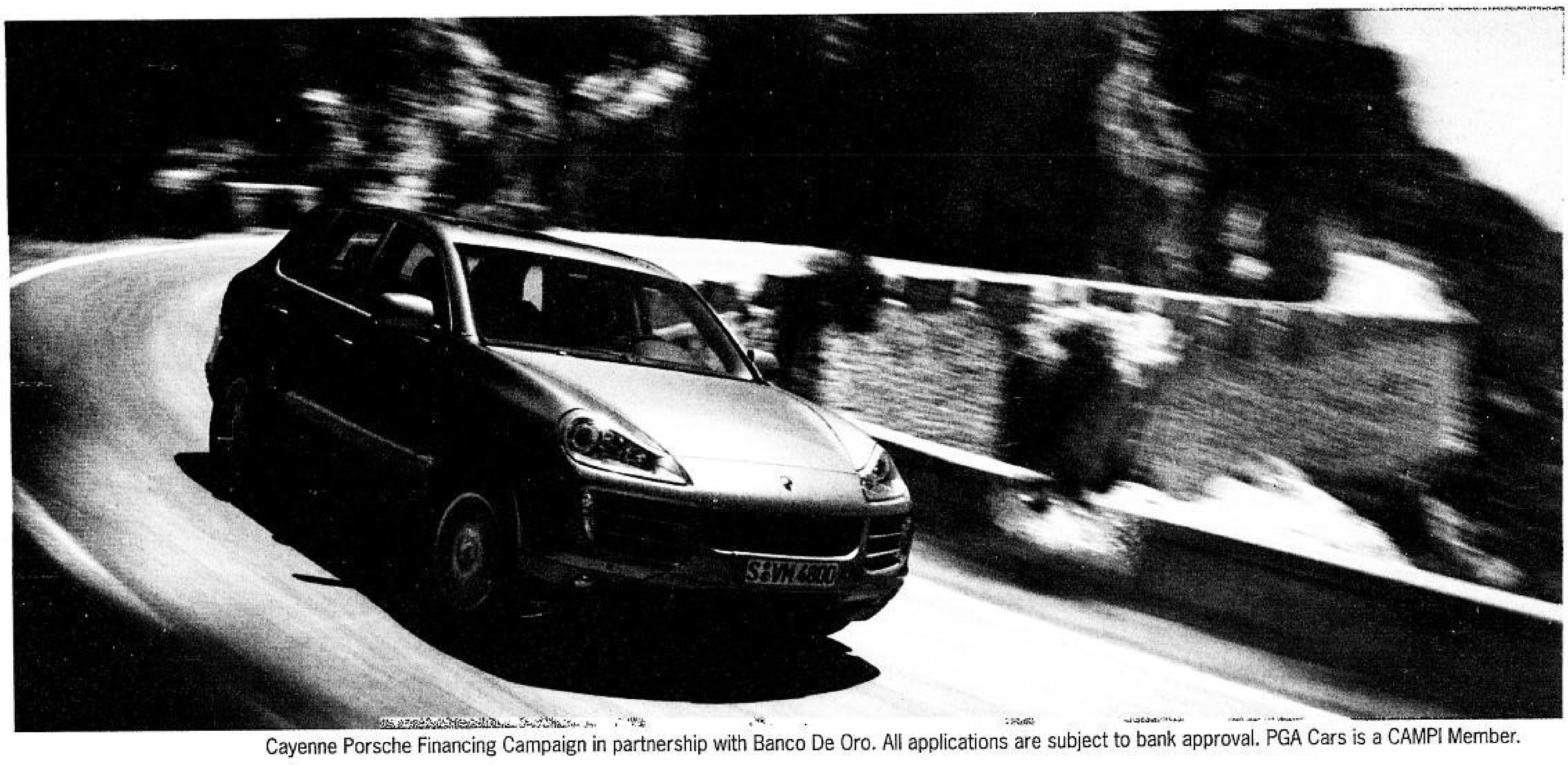


Rockstar Model Search

Upload your photo at www.raybanrockstar.ph

There is a rockstar in you. Look it, and live it. Be the next Ray-Ban endorser and live the life of a real one. Just send us a photo featuring the Rockstar in you wearing an authentic Ray-Ban eyewear from October 22, 2007 - January 22, 2008. Five winning entries will be used for various Ray-Ban advertising materials for 2008. Plus, each winner will take home Rockstar prizes like Motorola RAZR² V8, P 20,000.00 worth of grooming and cosmetic kit from Shu Uemura, Canon Digital IXUS 900 Ti, and a limited edition ***24-karat gold plated Ray-Ban Aviator.***

Canon
MOTOROLA RAZR²
shu uemura
etc
INQUIRER



Cayenne Porsche Financing Campaign in partnership with Banco De Oro. All applications are subject to bank approval. PGA Cars is a CAMPI Member.

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PGA Cars Porsche Building
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Tel.: (02) 727-0145

Per DTI NCR permit #A3-1011 series of 2007. Promo valid from December 7, 2007 to January 30, 2008.

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE RATES ADJUSTMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF R.A. 9136, WITH PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2007-152 RC

SURIGAO DEL SUR I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (SURSECO I),
Applicant,
x- -x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on October 18, 2007, the Surigao del Sur I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SURSECO I) filed an application for the Commission's approval of its Rates Adjustment in accordance with *Republic Act No. 9136*, with prayer for provisional authority.

In its application, SURSECO I, alleges, among others, the following:

1. The steep rise in SURSECO I's operation and maintenance expenses and other costs has made it imperative to adjust its rates in order to achieve its updated revenue requirements. The proposed revenue requirements will not be attained if SURSECO I continues to use its existing unbundled rates of 2000;

2. There is a substantial adjustment in the revenue requirement for *Operation and Maintenance* because of inflationary/economic factors: official government data show a sharp increase in costs from 2000 to 2005 (e.g. fuel alone has risen by 300% compared to prices in 2000). The *Payroll* portion of the SURSECO I's operation and maintenance cost is the actual cost incurred for the 2005 test year;

3. The adjustment for debt service is aimed at recovering the existing loans with National Electrification Administration (NEA) that were availed of after June 26, 2001, which were not included in the loans condoned by Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM Corp.); and

4. SURSECO I proposed a subsidy from non-lifeline consumers in the amount of PhP 0.1193/kWh.

Summarized below is the proposed schedule of rates and the estimated impact of the rate adjustment applied for on each customer class of the Distribution Utility:

Customer Class	Proposed Rates	Existing Rates	Difference
Residential:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso kWh)	1.2939	1.2597	0.0342
Supply System Charge (Peso kWh)	0.6588	0.6588	0
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.1921	0.4908	(0.2987)
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	20.0000	5.0000	15.0000
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.4807)	0.4807
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	2.1448	1.9286	0.2162
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	20.0000	5.0000	15.0000
Average Rate Per kWh	2.5229	2.0231	0.4998
Small Commercial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.9240	0.8913	0.0327
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	36.2500	36.2500	-
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	48.2000	48.2000	
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.2709)	0.2709
Loan Condonation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(8.9738)	8.9738
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.9240	0.6204	0.3036
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	84.4500	75.4762	8.9738
Average Rate Per kWh	1.4217	1.0652	0.3565
Large Commercial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.7967	0.7479	0.0488
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	36.9700	36.9700	-
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	79.0200	79.0200	-
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.2284)	0.2284
Loan Condonation (Peso/Customer/Month		(14.4269	14.4269
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.7967	0.5195	0.2772
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	115.9900	101.5631	14.4269
Average Rate Per kWh	0.9023	0.6120	0.2903
Industrial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	19.8000	19.8000	—
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.8462	0.8091	0.0371
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	104.3300	104.3300	—
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	268.8800	268.8800	—
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.2818)	0.2818
Loan Condonation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(48.0912	48.0912
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	19.8000	19.8000	—
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.8462	0.5273	0.3189
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	373.2100	325.1908	48.0192
Average Rate Per kWh	1.2369	0.9154	0.3215
Public Building:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.8663	0.7720	0.0943
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	35.7400	35.7400	—
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	63.8700	63.8700	—
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month		(0.2348)	0.2348
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(11.7472	11.7472
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.8663	0.5372	0.3291
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	99.6100	87.8628	11.7472
Average Rate Per kWh	1.2221	0.8511	0.3710
Street Light:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	2.7345	2.3800	0.3545
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	35.9700	35.9700	—
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	30.1600	26.2200	3.9400
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.2613)	0.2613
Loan Condonation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(0.5985)	0.5985
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	2.7345	2.1187	0.6158
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	66.1300	61.5915	4.5385
Average Rate Per kWh	2.8173	2.1991	0.6182
Sale for Resale:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.6304	0.1519	0.4785
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	36.5000	36.5000	—
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/kWh)	141.5200		141.5200
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)		(0.0463)	0.0463
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.4914)	0.4914
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.6304	0.1056	0.5248
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	178.0200	36.0086	142.0114
Average Rate Per kWh Charge	0.6679	0.1132	0.5547
Over-all Average Rate Per kWh	2.0738	1.6263	0.4475

The Commission has set the application for initial hearing, pre-trial conference, expository presentation and evidentiary hearing on **January 17 to 18, 2008 (Thursday and Friday) at two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.) and ten o'clock in the morning (10:00 A.M.), respectively, at SURSECO I's Office at Barangay San Fernando, City of Bislig, Surigao del Sur.**

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and the title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with the respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the application or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicant concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the application may request the applicant, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the application. The applicant is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the application and its attachments, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable, **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and the Honorable Commissioners, **ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN, RAUF A. TAN, MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTANEDA** and **JOSE C. REYES, Energy Regulatory Commission**, this 22nd of November, 2007 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN
Executive Director

(PDI - December 21 & 28, 2007)

Monte Oro to tap global debt market

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GROUP OF MONTE ORO GRID Resources Corp., Calaca High Power Corp. and State Grid Corp. of China will likely tap the international debt market to finance its acquisition of the 25-year National Transmission Corp. concession for $3.95 billion .

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Monte Oro chair and president Walter Brown said the group had yet to finalize the breakdown of how much the consortium would finance via equity and loans.

A source familiar with the matter said, however, that around $900 million of the total amount would be financed by equity, with the balance to be funded through a bond issuance "at the appropriate time."

"We're still discussing the structure with the shareholders. We still have time from now until we get the franchise," Brown said.

Right now, he said the consortium was banking on the payment structure provided by Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. Under this, the consortium will pay 25 percent of the bid price upon the approval of the franchise with the balance to be amortized over 20 years.

This, however, carries an interest rate of 12 percent per year.

The group could also opt to prepay the amount with the money to be raised through a bond float.

"There's a possibility that we'll be able to get financing at around 8-9 percent. A number of financial institutions have already approached us, but it's still too early to tell. We don't know what will happen to the market in the future," Brown said.

He further said that the consortium was confident it could secure a congressional franchise to operate, maintain and expand the nationwide transmission grid within the nonextendable one-year timeframe for franchise acquisition.

He said he believed that members of Congress would see the importance of having the consortium infuse some much needed capital into Transco, not only to make it operate more efficiently but also to expand it to meet future requirements.

The Monte Oro group has a year from being declared as the official winner of the Transco bidding to get a congressional franchise to operate the transmission system.

Should it fail to secure a franchise within that time, the group's bid security would be returned and the bidding would be declared a failure. PSALM would also reimburse the group's expenses of up to around $5 million.

Listed firms' combined profits up 24%

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LISTED FIRMS POSTED A 24.4-PERCENT jump in their combined profits to P203.58 billion in the first nine months of the year from P163.61 billion a year ago, data from the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) showed.

The PSE said in a statement that the total gross revenues of listed companies went up by 12.4 percent to P1.75 trillion during the nine-month period from P1.56 trillion a year ago.

The PSE data was based on the unaudited financial statements of 231 listed companies that were filed with the bourse as of Dec. 14, 2007. Those that submitted financial statements included those listed on the small and medium-sized enterprise board.

"The results of our latest study once again provide us with clear proof that our stock market stands on solid ground," said PSE president Francis Lim.

During the first nine months, the PSEi, the local market's main barometer of stock price movements, rose by 19.8 percent from its end-2006 level.

"If we can maintain our strong macroeconomic fundamentals, there is no doubt we can sustain our market's advance," Lim said.

Industry groups on the main board, except the services sector, enjoyed double-digit growth in profit from January to September this year.

The holding firms sector recorded the highest growth in combined net earnings at 54 percent to P53.68 billion in the first nine months, from P34.85 billion a year ago.

The combined net income of companies under the property sector grew by 50.9 percent, mining and oil sector by 43.7 percent, the financial sector by 18.8 percent, and the industrial sector by 18.5 percent.

The net profits of firms under the SME board went up by 20.5 percent to P8.81 billion from P7.31 billion a year earlier.

Firms under the services sector posted earnings of P49.77 billion in the period, up from from P48.44 billion a year earlier.

Firms under the industrial sector posted earnings of P42.32 billion; financial sector, P34.22 billion; property sector, P18.67 billion. and mining and oil sector, P4.93 billion.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 20, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
73	44	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	57.5	58.5	57	58.5	10,396,900
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	57.5	58.5	57.5	58	1,356,500
748	544	China Banking Corp.	650	660	650	660	350
23.5	14	Citystate Savings Bank	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	2,000
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	3,370,000
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	53	54.5	53	54	757,200
65.5	39	Philippine National Bank	46.5	46.5	46.5	46.5	159,100
39.57	20.43	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	24	24	23.5	23.75	76,300
90	65	Security Bank Corp.	76	77	76	76.5	168,400
66	42	Union Bank of the Philippines	43.5	43.5	43	43	71,900
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
5.6	1.92	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	4	4	4	4	15,000
16.25	4.6	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.5	320,200
1.6	0.55	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.92	0.92	50,000
5.9	4.6	I-Remit Inc.	4.65	4.75	4.65	4.65	102,000
6.8	1.74	Makati Finance Corp.	4	4	4	4	8,000
1,970.00	1,580.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,615.00	1,615.00	1,615.00	1,615.00	180
5	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	261,000
1,390.00	272.5	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,015.00	1,020.00	1,015.00	1,015.00	18,040
1.94	1.3	iVantage Corp.	1.64	1.68	1.64	1.68	1,561,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	5	5	4.95	4.95	243,000
0.57	0.22	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.38	0.4	0.38	0.38	1,430,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	60	61.5	60	61.5	236,000
92	58	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	70.5	73.5	70.5	72.5	110,900
18.75	8.8	Manila Water Co. Inc.	18.5	18.5	18	18.25	4,935,100
105.45	48.64	Manila Electric Co.	79.5	80.5	79	79.5	755,100
7.8	4.3	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	23,537,000
7.4	3.95	Petron Corp.	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.7	5,392,000
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	7	7	7	7	100,000
2.04	0.94	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	2,354,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.4	Alaska Milk Corp.	5	5	5	5	723,000
2.32	1.46	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.5	1.5	53,000
2.2	1.08	CADP Group Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	1,000
61	40.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	48.5	49	48.5	49	1,272,200
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
3.1	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	750,000
80	42.5	San Miguel Corp. "A"	59.5	59.5	59	59	209,400
88	43	San Miguel Corp. "B"	59.5	60	59.5	59.5	406,900
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.75	1,132,900
0.55	0.24	Vitarich Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.37	0.37	90,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	2.65	EEI Corp.	4	4.05	4	4.05	34,000
9.2	4.95	Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	89,000
7	3.65	Republic Cement Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	165,000
2	0.81	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	0.97	0.98	0.97	0.98	240,000
23	2.12	TKC Steel Corp.	9	9	8.8	8.8	12,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.75	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.05	4.1	51,000
1.46	0.51	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	190,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.185	Picop Resources Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	610,000
9	6.2	Splash Corp.	8.2	8.3	7.9	8.2	5,896,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
39	18.75	ABS-CBN Holdings Corp.-PDR	34	34	34	34	211,100
3.9	2.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	533,000
0.185	0.0575	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	3,430,000
1.28	0.3	APC Group Inc.	0.59	0.6	0.59	0.59	1,050,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.4	2.48	2.4	2.48	54,000
0.0182	0.0076	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	20,000,000
9.7	5.8	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.8	6,790,000
0.021	0.01	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	16,400,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	1,482,000
1.38	0.61	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.7	850,000
2.9	1.04	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.32	2.34	2.32	2.34	455,000
645	400	Ayala Corp.	495	505	495	500	258,650
5.8	2.14	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.15	4.45	4.15	4.45	8,137,000
12	5.6	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.2	9.4	9.2	9.3	660,000
3.55	1.76	House of Investments Inc.	2	2	2	2	5,000
5.9	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	34,000
28	1.42	Lodestar Investment Hldgs Corp.	17	17	15.75	17	12,600
0.95	0.32	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	680,000
11.5	1.5	Minerales Industrias Corp.	6.2	6.3	6	6.2	413,000
8.5	3.1	PAL Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6,000
0.28	0.016	Pacifica Inc. "A"	0.215	0.215	0.2	0.205	29,840,000
0.75	0.19	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	50,000
452.5	287.71	SM Investments Corp.	335	337.5	330	337.5	1,360,770
2.1	1.08	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	19,000
0.73	0.155	Sinophil Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	790,000
2	0.92	South China Resources Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	25,000
2.9	0.93	Vivant Corp.	1.3	1.8	1.3	1.8	15,000
0.75	0.12	Wellex Industries Inc	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	2,390,000
1.1	0.26	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.5	100,000
		PROPERTY					
2.38	1	A Brown Co. Inc	2.02	2.12	1.94	2.1	5,748,000
19.25	12.08	Ayala Land Inc.	14.25	14.25	14	14.25	1,695,600
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.22	1.26	1.22	1.24	2,157,000
4.7	3.15	Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	28,000
0.86	0.4	Crown Equities Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	130,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
1.05	0.56	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.79	0.79	3,330,000
6.9	1.1	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	3.85	3.9	3.8	3.9	85,000
0.47	0.0575	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	130,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.95	0.96	0.93	0.93	11,350,000
2.44	1.22	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.34	33,452,000
1.12	0.31	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.54	710,000
4.6	2.24	Megaworld Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.75	15,601,000
6.4	3.2	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.1	4.1	4	4	102,000
0.7	0.15	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	100,000
0.86	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.47	2,960,000
9.2	1.7	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4.25	4.3	4.25	4.3	33,000
23	14.5	Robinson Land Corp.	15.75	16	15.5	16	2,031,100
13.5	8	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.25	16,321,000
3.25	1.5	Shang Properties Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	312,000
4.5	0.38	Sta. Lucia Land Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.64	1.64	1,751,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.59	0.59	190,000
0.49	0.0975	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	400,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	11,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	16.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	13,300
12	7.6	GMA Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.1	7.9	8	2,067,000
11.75	7.5	GMA Network Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	326,000
1.03	0.81	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	30,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.56	1.64	1.56	1.6	29,344,000
1,750.00	1,180.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,485.00	1,485.00	1,470.00	1,485.00	128,890
3,285.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,005.00	3,025.00	3,000.00	3,015.00	38,320
8.1	5.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.9	7.1	6.9	7.1	1,714,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.19	17,430,000
16.5	2.1	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	15.25	15.25	15	15.25	373,600
11.5	3.55	IPVG Corp.	7.5	7.5	7.3	7.4	54,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.036	0.037	0.036	0.037	1,500,000
5	1.62	Information Capital Tech. Ventures Inc.	2.8	3.1	2.8	3.1	90,000
2.9	1.1	Ionics Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	40,000
0.32	0.05	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.17	0.175	0.165	0.165	4,960,000
2.26	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.82	1.92	1.82	1.86	1,421,000
0.0725	0.03	Philweb Corp.	0.045	0.045	0.043	0.044	88,700,000
4.75	1.64	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.32	2.38	2.32	2.34	757,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
6.8	3.6	Asian Terminals Inc.	4	4	4	4	70,000
49	19	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	43.5	44	43.5	44	604,500
2.3	0.93	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	572,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	99,000
1.52	0.33	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.18	783,000
1.2	0.55	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.81	0.82	0.81	0.82	200,000
		EDUCATION					
3.7	2.6	iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	5,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
6.14	0.94	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	3.5	5.3	3.5	4.6	219,500
6	2.04	Macroasia Corp.	4.7	4.75	4.6	4.75	144,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	345,000
30	5.3	Paxys Inc.	5.9	6.1	5.7	6	763,000
472.5	350	eTelecare Global Solutions Inc.	365	365	365	365	10
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.01	88,000,000
7.2	3.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	31,000
7.4	3.85	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	130,000
21.25	8.1	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	13	13.5	13	13.5	620,600
20.75	8.9	Benguet Corp. "A"	18.75	19	18.75	19	129,900
12.75	2.1	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	8.5	8.6	8.4	8.5	139,000
3.1	0.6	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	1.8	1.84	1.76	1.8	33,206,000
0.56	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.47	0.49	0.46	0.49	23,030,000
0.61	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.49	33,020,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.028	13,100,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	2,400,000
30	3.6	NiHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	19.25	19.25	18.25	19	271,500
0.015	0.007	Omico Corp.-Warrants	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	16,000,000
0.021	0.01	Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	77,000,000
3.3	3	Oriental Peninsula Res.	3.1	3.1	3	3.05	28,495,000
11.25	3.5	Philex Mining Corp.	9.4	9.5	9.3	9.5	1,302,000
49.5	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	43	43	43	43	1,000
1.76	0.99	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	971,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.27	Basic Energy Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.3	1,980,000
0.029	0.011	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	25,800,000
0.03	0.011	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.025	38,500,000
13.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10	10	10	10	38,000
0.032	0.0098	The Philodrill Corp.	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.028	9,500,000

AVERAGES			VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	845.52 UP	6.25	18,686,070	775,315,295.00
Industrial	4,414.10 UP	19.83	51,028,500	536,371,480.00
Holding Firms	1,889.47 UP	15.55	95,840,020	688,604,240.00
Property	1,467.35 UP	19.57	98,727,700	361,456,435.00
Service	1,811.64 UP	7.46	150,635,120	425,092,575.00
Mining & Oil	8,133.24 UP	38.57	377,665,000	209,539,570.00
All Shares Index	2,150.21 UP	13.41		
PSEI	3,491.96 UP	25.68		
		GRAND TOTALS	792,582,410	2,996,379,595.00

COMPILED BY SCHATZI QUODALA, INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE RATES ADJUSTMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF R.A. 9136, WITH PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2007-152 RC

SURIGAO DEL SUR I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (SURSECO I),
Applicant,
x - x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on October 18, 2007, the Surigao del Sur I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SURSECO I) filed an application for the Commission's approval of its Rates Adjustment in accordance with *Republic Act No. 9136*, with prayer for provisional authority.

In its application, SURSECO I, alleges, among others, the following:

1. The steep rise in SURSECO I's operation and maintenance expenses and other costs has made it imperative to adjust its rates in order to achieve its updated revenue requirements. The proposed revenue requirements will not be attained if SURSECO I continues to use its existing unbundled rates of 2000;

2. There is a substantial adjustment in the revenue requirement for *Operation and Maintenance* because of inflationary/economic factors: official government data show a sharp increase in costs from 2000 to 2005 (e.g. fuel alone has risen by 300% compared to prices in 2000). The *Payroll* portion of the SURSECO I's operation and maintenance cost is the actual cost incurred for the 2005 test year;

3. The adjustment for debt service is aimed at recovering the existing loans with National Electrification Administration (NEA) that were availed of after June 26, 2001, which were not included in the loans condoned by Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM Corp.); and

4. SURSECO I proposed a subsidy from non-lifeline consumers in the amount of PhP 0.1193/kWh.

Summarized below is the proposed schedule of rates and the estimated impact of the rate adjustment applied for on each customer class of the Distribution Utility:

Customer Class	Proposed Rates	Existing Rates	Difference
Residential:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso kWh)	1.2939	1.2597	0.0342
Supply System Charge (Peso kWh)	0.6588	0.6588	0
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.1921	0.4908	(0.2987)
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	20.0000	5.0000	15.0000
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.4807)	0.4807
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	2.1448	1.9286	0.2162
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	20.0000	5.0000	15.0000
Average Rate Per kWh	2.5229	2.0231	0.4998
Small Commercial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.9240	0.8913	0.0327
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	36.2500	36.2500	-
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	48.2000	48.2000	
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.2709)	0.2709
Loan Condonation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(8.9738)	8.9738
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.9240	0.6204	0.3036
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	84.4500	75.4762	8.9738
Average Rate Per kWh	1.4217	1.0652	0.3565
Large Commercial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.7967	0.7479	0.0488
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	36.9700	36.9700	-
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	79.0200	79.0200	-
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.2284)	0.2284
Loan Condonation (Peso/Customer/Month		(14.4269	14.4269
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.7967	0.5195	0.2772
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	115.9900	101.5631	14.4269
Average Rate Per kWh	0.9023	0.6120	0.2903
Industrial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	19.8000	19.8000	—
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.8462	0.8091	0.0371
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	104.3300	104.3300	—
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	268.8800	268.8800	—
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.2818)	0.2818
Loan Condonation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(48.0912	48.0912
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	19.8000	19.8000	—
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.8462	0.5273	0.3189
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	373.2100	325.1908	48.0192
Average Rate Per kWh	1.2369	0.9154	0.3215
Public Building:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.8663	0.7720	0.0943
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	35.7400	35.7400	—
Metering System Charge (Peso/kWh)	63.8700	63.8700	—
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month		(0.2348)	0.2348
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(11.7472	11.7472
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.8663	0.5372	0.3291
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	99.6100	87.8628	11.7472
Average Rate Per kWh	1.2221	0.8511	0.3710
Street Light:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	2.7345	2.3800	0.3545
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	35.9700	35.9700	—
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)	30.1600	26.2200	3.9400
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.2613)	0.2613
Loan Condonation (Peso/Customer/Month)		(0.5985)	0.5985
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	2.7345	2.1187	0.6158
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	66.1300	61.5915	4.5385
Average Rate Per kWh	2.8173	2.1991	0.6182
Sale for Resale:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso/kWh)	0.6304	0.1519	0.4785
Supply System Charge (Peso/kWh)	36.5000	36.5000	—
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/kWh)	141.5200		141.5200
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/Meter/Month)		(0.0463)	0.0463
Loan Condonation (Peso/kWh)		(0.4914)	0.4914
Total Peso Per kWh Charge	0.6304	0.1056	0.5248
Total Peso Per Customer/Month	178.0200	36.0086	142.0114
Average Rate Per kWh Charge	0.6679	0.1132	0.5547
Over-all Average Rate Per kWh	2.0738	1.6263	0.4475

The Commission has set the application for initial hearing, pre-trial conference, expository presentation and evidentiary hearing on **January 17 to 18, 2008 (Thursday and Friday) at two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.) and ten o'clock in the morning (10:00 A.M.), respectively, at SURSECO I's Office at Barangay San Fernando, City of Bislig, Surigao del Sur.**

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and the title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with the respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the application or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicant concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the application may request the applicant, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the application. The applicant is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the application and its attachments, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable, **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and the Honorable Commissioners, **ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN, RAUF A. TAN, MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTANEDA** and **JOSE C. REYES, Energy Regulatory Commission**, this 22nd of November, 2007 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN
Executive Director

(PDI – December 21 & 28, 2007)

Monte Oro to tap global debt market

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GROUP OF MONTE ORO GRID RE-sources Corp., Calaca High Power Corp. and State Grid Corp. of China will likely tap the international debt market to finance its acquisition of the 25-year National Transmission Corp. concession for $3.95 billion .

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Monte Oro chair and president Walter Brown said the group had yet to finalize the breakdown of how much the consortium would finance via equity and loans.

A source familiar with the matter said, however, that around $900 million of the total amount would be financed by equity, with the balance to be funded through a bond issuance "at the appropriate time."

"We're still discussing the structure with the shareholders. We still have time from now until we get the franchise," Brown said.

Right now, he said the consortium was banking on the payment structure provided by Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. Under this, the consortium will pay 25 percent of the bid price upon the approval of the franchise with the balance to be amortized over 20 years.

This, however, carries an interest rate of 12 percent per year.

The group could also opt to prepay the amount with the money to be raised through a bond float.

"There's a possibility that we'll be able to get financing at around 8-9 percent. A number of financial institutions have already approached us, but it's still too early to tell. We don't know what will happen to the market in the future," Brown said.

He further said that the consortium was confident it could secure a congressional franchise to operate, maintain and expand the nationwide transmission grid within the nonextendable one-year timeframe for franchise acquisition.

He said he believed that members of Congress would see the importance of having the consortium infuse some much needed capital into Transco, not only to make it operate more efficiently but also to expand it to meet future requirements.

The Monte Oro group has a year from being declared as the official winner of the Transco bidding to get a congressional franchise to operate the transmission system.

Should it fail to secure a franchise within that time, the group's bid security would be returned and the bidding would be declared a failure. PSALM would also reimburse the group's expenses of up to around $5 million.

Listed firms' combined profits up 24%

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LISTED FIRMS POSTED A 24.4-PERCENT jump in their combined profits to P203.58 billion in the first nine months of the year from P163.61 billion a year ago, data from the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) showed.

The PSE said in a statement that the total gross revenues of listed companies went up by 12.4 percent to P1.75 trillion during the nine-month period from P1.56 trillion a year ago.

The PSE data was based on the unaudited financial statements of 231 listed companies that were filed with the bourse as of Dec. 14, 2007. Those that submitted financial statements included those listed on the small and medium-sized enterprise board.

"The results of our latest study once again provide us with clear proof that our stock market stands on solid ground," said PSE president Francis Lim.

During the first nine months, the PSEi, the local market's main barometer of stock price movements, rose by 19.8 percent from its end-2006 level.

"If we can maintain our strong macroeconomic fundamentals, there is no doubt we can sustain our market's advance," Lim said.

Industry groups on the main board, except the services sector, enjoyed double-digit growth in profit from January to September this year.

The holding firms sector recorded the highest growth in combined net earnings at 54 percent to P53.68 billion in the first nine months, from P34.85 billion a year ago.

The combined net income of companies under the property sector grew by 50.9 percent, mining and oil sector by 43.7 percent, the financial sector by 18.8 percent, and the industrial sector by 18.5 percent.

The net profits of firms under the SME board went up by 20.5 percent to P8.81 billion from P7.31 billion a year earlier.

Firms under the services sector posted earnings of P49.77 billion in the period, up from from P48.44 billion a year earlier.

Firms under the industrial sector posted earnings of P42.32 billion; financial sector, P34.22 billion; property sector, P18.67 billion. and mining and oil sector, P4.93 billion.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 20, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
73	44	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	57.5	58.5	57	58.5	10,396,900
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	57.5	58.5	57.5	58	1,356,500
748	544	China Banking Corp.	650	660	650	660	350
23.5	14	Citystate Savings Bank	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	2,000
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	3,370,000
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	53	54.5	53	54	757,200
65.5	39	Philippine National Bank	46.5	46.5	46.5	46.5	159,100
39.57	20.43	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	24	24	23.5	23.75	76,300
90	65	Security Bank Corp.	76	77	76	76.5	168,400
66	42	Union Bank of the Philippines	43.5	43.5	43	43	71,900
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
5.6	1.92	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	4	4	4	4	15,000
16.25	4.6	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.5	320,200
1.6	0.55	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.92	0.92	50,000
5.9	4.6	I-Remit Inc.	4.65	4.75	4.65	4.65	102,000
6.8	1.74	Makati Finance Corp.	4	4	4	4	8,000
1,970.00	1,580.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,615.00	1,615.00	1,615.00	1,615.00	180
5	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	261,000
1,390.00	272.5	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,015.00	1,020.00	1,015.00	1,015.00	18,040
1.94	1.3	iVantage Corp.	1.64	1.68	1.64	1.68	1,561,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	5	5	4.95	4.95	243,000
0.57	0.22	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.38	0.4	0.38	0.38	1,430,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	60	61.5	60	61.5	236,000
92	58	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	70.5	73.5	70.5	72.5	110,900
18.75	8.8	Manila Water Co. Inc.	18.5	18.5	18	18.25	4,935,100
105.45	48.64	Manila Electric Co.	79.5	80.5	79	79.5	755,100
7.8	4.3	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	23,537,000
7.4	3.95	Petron Corp.	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.7	5,392,000
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	7	7	7	7	100,000
2.04	0.94	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	2,354,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.4	Alaska Milk Corp.	5	5	5	5	723,000
2.32	1.46	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.5	1.5	53,000
2.2	1.08	CADP Group Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	1,000
61	40.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	48.5	49	48.5	49	1,272,200
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
3.1	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	750,000
80	42.5	San Miguel Corp. "A"	59.5	59.5	59	59	209,400
88	43	San Miguel Corp. "B"	59.5	60	59.5	59.5	406,900
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.75	1,132,900
0.55	0.24	Vitarich Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.37	0.37	90,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	2.65	EEI Corp.	4	4.05	4	4.05	34,000
9.2	4.95	Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	89,000
7	3.65	Republic Cement Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	165,000
2	0.81	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	0.97	0.98	0.97	0.98	240,000
23	2.12	TKC Steel Corp.	9	9	8.8	8.8	12,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.75	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.05	4.1	51,000
1.46	0.51	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	190,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.185	Picop Resources Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	610,000
9	6.2	Splash Corp.	8.2	8.3	7.9	8.2	5,896,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
39	18.75	ABS-CBN Holdings Corp.-PDR	34	34	34	34	211,100
3.9	2.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	533,000
0.185	0.0575	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	3,430,000
1.28	0.3	APC Group Inc.	0.59	0.6	0.59	0.59	1,050,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.4	2.48	2.4	2.48	54,000
0.0182	0.0076	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	20,000,000
9.7	5.8	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.8	6,790,000
0.021	0.01	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	16,400,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	1,482,000
1.38	0.61	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.7	850,000
2.9	1.04	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.32	2.34	2.32	2.34	455,000
645	400	Ayala Corp.	495	505	495	500	258,650
5.8	2.14	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.15	4.45	4.15	4.45	8,137,000
12	5.6	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.2	9.4	9.2	9.3	660,000
3.55	1.76	House of Investments Inc.	2	2	2	2	5,000
5.9	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	34,000
28	1.42	Lodestar Investment Hldgs Corp.	17	17	15.75	17	12,600
0.95	0.32	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	680,000
11.5	1.5	Minerales Industrias Corp.	6.2	6.3	6	6.2	413,000
8.5	3.1	PAL Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6,000
0.28	0.016	Pacifica Inc. "A"	0.215	0.215	0.2	0.205	29,840,000
0.75	0.19	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	50,000
452.5	287.71	SM Investments Corp.	335	337.5	330	337.5	1,360,770
2.1	1.08	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	19,000
0.73	0.155	Sinophil Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	790,000
2	0.92	South China Resources Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	25,000
2.9	0.93	Vivant Corp.	1.3	1.8	1.3	1.8	15,000
0.75	0.12	Wellex Industries Inc	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	2,390,000
1.1	0.26	Zeus Holdings Inc	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.5	100,000
		PROPERTY					
2.38	1	A Brown Co. Inc.	2.02	2.12	1.94	2.1	5,748,000
19.25	12.08	Ayala Land Inc.	14.25	14.25	14	14.25	1,695,600
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.22	1.26	1.22	1.24	2,157,000
4.7	3.15	Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	28,000
0.86	0.4	Crown Equities Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	130,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
1.05	0.56	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.79	0.79	3,330,000
6.9	1.1	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	3.85	3.9	3.8	3.9	85,000
0.47	0.0575	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	130,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.95	0.96	0.93	0.93	11,350,000
2.44	1.22	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.34	33,452,000
1.12	0.31	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.54	710,000
4.6	2.24	Megaworld Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.75	15,601,000
6.4	3.2	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.1	4.1	4	4	102,000
0.7	0.15	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	100,000
0.86	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.47	2,960,000
9.2	1.7	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4.25	4.3	4.25	4.3	33,000
23	14.5	Robinson Land Corp.	15.75	16	15.5	16	2,031,100
13.5	8	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.25	16,321,000
3.25	1.5	Shang Properties Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	312,000
4.5	0.38	Sta. Lucia Land Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.64	1.64	1,751,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.59	0.59	190,000
0.49	0.0975	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	400,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	11,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	18.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	13,300
12	7.6	GMA Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.1	7.9	8	2,067,000
11.75	7.5	GMA Network Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	326,000
1.03	0.81	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	30,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.56	1.64	1.56	1.6	29,344,000
1,750.00	1,180.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,485.00	1,485.00	1,470.00	1,485.00	128,890
3,285.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,005.00	3,025.00	3,000.00	3,015.00	38,320
8.1	5.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.9	7.1	6.9	7.1	1,714,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.19	17,430,000
16.5	2.1	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	15.25	15.25	15	15.25	373,600
11.5	3.55	IPVG Corp.	7.5	7.5	7.3	7.4	54,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.036	0.037	0.036	0.037	1,500,000
5	1.62	Information Capital Tech. Ventures Inc.	2.8	3.1	2.8	3.1	90,000
2.9	1.1	Ionics Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	40,000
0.32	0.05	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.17	0.175	0.165	0.165	4,960,000
2.26	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.82	1.92	1.82	1.86	1,421,000
0.0725	0.03	Philweb Corp.	0.045	0.045	0.043	0.044	88,700,000
4.75	1.64	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l Inc.	2.32	2.38	2.32	2.34	757,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
6.8	3.6	Asian Terminals Inc.	4	4	4	4	70,000
49	19	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	43.5	44	43.5	44	604,500
2.3	0.93	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	572,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.38	2.38	2.38	2.38	99,000
1.52	0.33	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.18	783,000
1.2	0.55	Waterfront Philippines Inc	0.81	0.82	0.81	0.82	200,000
		EDUCATION					
3.7	2.6	iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	5,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
6.14	0.94	JTH Davies Holdings Inc	3.5	5.3	3.5	4.6	219,500
6	2.04	Macroasia Corp.	4.7	4.75	4.6	4.75	144,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	345,000
30	5.3	Paxys Inc.	5.9	6.1	5.7	6	763,000
472.5	350	eTelecare Global Solutions Inc	365	365	365	365	10
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.01	88,000,000
7.2	3.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	31,000
7.4	3.85	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	130,000
21.25	8.1	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	13	13.5	13	13.5	620,600
20.75	8.9	Benguet Corp. "A"	18.75	19	18.75	19	129,900
12.75	2.1	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	8.5	8.6	8.4	8.5	139,000
3.1	0.6	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	1.8	1.84	1.76	1.8	33,206,000
0.56	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.47	0.49	0.46	0.49	23,030,000
0.61	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.49	33,020,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.028	13,100,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	2,400,000
30	3.6	NiHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	19.25	19.25	18.25	19	271,500
0.015	0.007	Omico Corp.-Warrants	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	16,000,000
0.021	0.01	Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	77,000,000
3.3	3	Oriental Peninsula Res.	3.1	3.1	3	3.05	28,495,000
11.25	3.5	Philex Mining Corp.	9.4	9.5	9.3	9.5	1,302,000
49.5	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	43	43	43	43	1,000
1.76	0.99	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	971,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.27	Basic Energy Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.3	1,980,000
0.029	0.011	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	25,800,000
0.03	0.011	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.025	38,500,000
13.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10	10	10	10	38,000
0.032	0.0098	The Philodrill Corp.	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.028	9,500,000

	AVERAGES		VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	845.52 UP	6.25	18,686,070	775,315,295.00
Industrial	4,414.10 UP	19.83	51,028,500	536,371,480.00
Holding Firms	1,889.47 UP	15.55	95,840,020	688,604,240.00
Property	1,467.35 UP	19.57	98,727,700	361,456,435.00
Service	1,811.64 UP	7.46	150,635,120	425,092,575.00
Mining & Oil	8,133.24 UP	38.57	377,665,000	209,539,570.00
All Shares Index	2,150.21 UP	13.41		
PSEi	3,491.96 UP	25.68		
		GRAND TOTALS	792,582,410	2,996,379,595.00

COMPILED BY SCHATZI QUODALA, INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

Sumilao: The long view

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

AGRIWATCH

THE SUMILAO FARMERS' WAIT, FROM their initial 28-day hunger strike in 1997 to their recent march from Sumilao, Bukidnon to Manila, was long: 10 years.

The march itself was also long: 1,700 kilometers.

But all this sacrifice to get back the land may go to waste if we do not take a long view and broad view of the Sumilao controversy.

Here's a summary of key Sumilao events.

1970s—Norberto Quisumbing assumes ownership of contested 144 hectares of prime agricultural land in Sumilao, Bukidnon (this originally was part of the seat of government of Higaonan indigenous cultural communities).

1988—Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) enacted.

1995—Under CARP, 137 farmers receive certificates of land ownership awards (CLOAs) for 144 hectares.

1996—CLOA decision reversed. Farmers stage "lugol," an indigenous farmer hunger strike, for 28 days. Former President Fidel Ramos then allocates 100 hectares for the farmers and 44 hectares for Quisumbing. Quisumbing brings case to Supreme Court.

1999—Due partly to a technicality, Supreme Court declares all 144 hectares for Quisumbing, provided that a specified agro-industrial plan be completed within five years.

2002—Quisumbing sells property to San Miguel Foods, Inc. (SMFI) with no plan implementation.

2004—Five-year deadline expires, still without specified agro-industrial plan implementation; land should have automatically reverted back to the farmers, but did not.

2007—Totally frustrated using other peaceful means, Sumilao farmers stage march. President Macapagal-Arroyo issues Executive Order authorizing reversion of land to CARP coverage.

Contending parties

The case is far from finished.

The Sumilao farmers' chief legal counsel, executive director Marlon Manuel of Sentro ng Alternatibong Ligapanligal (Saligan), said: "It will be the start of another long battle to return the land to the farmers."

On the farmers' side, there is Samuel Merida of the Mapalad Multipurpose Cooperative who led the hunger strike 10 years ago, and Napoleon Merida Jr., who chairs the San Vicente Landless Farmers Association (Salfa).

They are members of Pakisama, the largest farmer group in the country, whose former chair, currently Alyansa Agrikultura's vice president, Vic Fabe, has helped gain tremendous support for the farmers from civil society.

On the other side is San Miguel Corporation, which has shown exemplary corporate social responsibility (CSR) in many instances.

Another view

At this time, many perceive the two parties to be in unavoidable conflict.

If we are to rely solely on a short-sighted legal perspective, this may result in a long drawn out battle, which will result in increased animosity.

Harvard University-trained mediator Anabelle Abaya used to say: "Instead of depending completely on court proceedings which may hamper creative "out of the box" solutions, open discussion, mediation, and negotiation should first be tried."

Abaya's experience in many instances has proven this and the long term view to be the right approach.

When I served briefly as chief of staff of the Department of Agrarian Reform, and later as undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture, I observed that when support services were given, the farmers end up being better off.

But all too often, when the support services (formerly given by the landlord) were not provided by the government because of lack of resources, the farmers fared even worse.

They would often end up selling their land, defeating the very purpose of land reform.

A successful alternative model is when a private sector firm provides these support services, together with world-class technology, economies of scale and access to profitable markets.

An example is the DOLE-agrarian reform beneficiary partnership, where the farmer retains land ownership and uses the DOLE support services to the advantage of all concerned. Farmer incomes are at P15,000 a month, more than four times what they may otherwise have gotten if they did things on their own.

Best solution

Justice demands that the Sumilao farmers get their land back.

But in addition, partnership, rather than conflict, should be nurtured with SMFI, which can rent part of the land from the farmers and additionally provide them with world class support services.

It is the long view of unity, rather than the short view of battle, that will achieve a better life for all.

(The author is the chair of Agriwatch, former secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary for Agriculture, and Trade and Industry. For inquiries and suggestions, email agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 8522112).

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Dusit Yuletide Activities

Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve Dinner Set Menu
December 24 and 31
Authentic Thai 5-course dinner set menu offered on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve at PhP 1,500.00 nett per person inclusive of a glass of red wine or white wine.

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tosca
Christmas Eve Dinner Set Menu
December 24
Christmas Eve 5-course dinner set menu at PhP 2,800.00 nett per person inclusive of unlimited drink of Prosecco sparkling wine.

New Year's Eve Dinner Set Menu
December 31
New Year's Eve 6-course dinner set menu at PhP 3,070.00 nett per person inclusive of unlimited drink of Prosecco sparkling wine.

Christmas Day and New Year's Day Brunch Buffet
December 25 and January 1, 2008
Italian Brunch buffet offered on Christmas and New Year's Day at PhP 1,350.00 nett per person inclusive of unlimited drink of Prosecco sparkling wine

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BASIX
Christmas Eve Dinner Buffet
December 24
Offered on Christmas Eve at PhP 1,600.00 nett per person inclusive of a glass of red wine or white wine

New Year's Eve Dinner Buffet
December 31
Offered on New Year's Eve at PhP 1,800.00 nett per person inclusive of unlimited drink of Prosecco sparkling wine.

Christmas Day and New Year's Day Brunch Buffet
December 25 and 31
Special brunch buffet offered on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve at PhP 1,500.00 nett per person inclusive drink of ice tea or chilled juices.

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Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve Dinner Kaiseki Set Menu
December 24 and 31
Traditional kaiseki 7-course dinner set menu offered at PhP 2,500.00 nett per person inclusive of a glass of red wine or white wine.

New Year's Day Special 8-course Set Menu
January 1, 2008
Aptly called "Shinshun Hana Zen", a special set menu offered for lunch and dinner at PhP 1,800.00 nett per person.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Christmas Filipino Dinner Set Menu
December 24
Traditional Christmas Filipino 5-course dinner menu offered on Christmas Eve at PhP 1,230.00 nett per person.

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December 1 to January 6, 2008 - Christmas hampers and goodies

Hamper Basket A	PhP1,850 nett
Hamper Basket B	PhP4,500 nett
Hamper Basket C	PhP5,000 nett

Sparkling New Year's Eve Countdown

Ramon "RJ" Jacinto at Dusit Hotel Nikko

Move and groove to the music of RJ Jacinto as he performs his signature repertoire and welcome 2008 with a bang on December 31 at the Grand Ballroom.

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Benjarong (Thai)	PhP 8,800 nett	PhP 11,800 nett
Umu (Japanese)	PhP 10,800 nett	PhP 13,800 nett

Deluxe Room Accommodation New Year's Eve Dinn

	REGULAR FLOOR	DUSIT CLUB
Basix (All day dining)	PhP 10,000 nett	PhP 13,000 nett
Tosca (Italian)	PhP 12,540 nett	PhP 15,000 nett
Benjarong (Thai)	PhP 9,400 nett	PhP 12,400 nett
Umu (Japanese)	PhP 11,400 nett	PhP 14,400 nett

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Gov't subsidies to state firms up 84% to P19B

By Michelle V. Remo

SUBSIDIES PROVIDED BY THE national government to state-owned firms rose by 84 percent to P18.92 billion in January to November this year from P10.26 billion a year ago.

Subsidies are given by the government to government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs) to ensure the smooth flow of their operations.

The substantial increase in the amount of subsidies reflected the failure of these firms to meet their goal of reducing their financial dependence on the national government.

In November alone, subsidies provided by the government reached P3.292 billion, a 545-percent jump from only P510 million in the same month last year.

Finance officials said several state firms needed higher subsidies due to additional public service programs they were implementing.

For instance, they said, the subsidies received by Land Bank of the Philippines were meant for the government's agrarian reform program. Landbank was simply tasked to facilitate the program's implementation.

Of the government's spending for subsidies in the first 11 months, the biggest share of P3.84 billion went to Landbank. Other top recipients of subsidies in the first 11 months were: National Housing Authority, P3.65 billion; National Electrification Administration, P2.42 billion; Philippine Health Insurance Corp., P2.05 billion; and Technical Livelihood Resource Center, P1.39 billion.

The Department of Finance had said it wanted to reduce the government's spending for subsidies to GOCCs and GFIs to instill financial discipline among them. But officials said the housing programs of the NHA and health programs of the PHIC, among others, needed additional funding.

The government was supposed to limit the subsidies to state-owned firms to only P4.89 billion for the entire 2007. The goal, however, has been breached since the end of the first half.

Subsidies in January to November this year had also surpassed the P13.81 billion recorded for the entire 2006.

The Department of Finance said state firms, despite the huge subsidies they receive, had been contributing more to the state coffers in the form of dividends and guarantee fees.

The DOF earlier said the national government had collected P32.49 billion in dividends and fees from GOCCs and GFIs in the first 11 months of the year. This was 78 percent more than the year-ago level of P18.21 billion.

Dividends received by the government partly offset its spending for subsidies, officials said.

The DOF said it had intensified its audit of the financial statements of GOCCs and GFIs to ensure that they remit the right amount of dividends.

CURRENCIES

December 20, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.695459	1.000000	41.7540
Japan	Yen	0.006132	0.008817	0.3681
United Kingdom	Pound	1.389526	1.998000	83.4245
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.089147	0.128185	5.3522
Switzerland	Franc	0.601972	0.865576	36.1413
Canada	Dollar	0.693517	0.997208	41.6374
Singapore	Dollar	0.476407	0.685025	28.6025
Australia	Dollar	0.595988	0.856971	35.7820
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.852087	2.663116	111.1957
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.185456	0.266667	11.1344
Brunei	Dollar	0.474781	0.682687	28.5049
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000074	0.000106	0.0044
Thailand	Baht	0.022802	0.032787	1.3690
UAE	Dirham	0.189343	0.272257	11.3678
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.437900	60.0381
Korea	Won	0.000741	0.001065	0.0445
China	Yuan**	0.094276	0.135560	5.6602
Denmark	Kroner	0.134043	0.192741	8.0477
India	Rupee	0.017584	0.025284	1.0557
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.207599	0.298507	12.4639
New Zealand	Dollar	0.524360	0.753977	31.4816
Sweden	Kroner	0.105796	0.152124	6.3518
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021395	0.030764	1.2845

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Dec. 19, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Dec. 19, 2007

BSP . . .

From page B1

the cost of said materials cheaper.

Apart from exporters, families of overseas Filipino workers also feel the pinch of a rising peso, which in effect reduces the value of the currencies remitted to them.

The peso recently broke into the 41-to-a-US dollar territory, aided by strong dollar inflows in the form of remittances from overseas Filipino workers and investments. The peso averaged at 42.798 to a US dollar in January to November this year compared with last year's average of 46.549.

Yesterday's rate cut narrowed the gap between the BSP's key borrowing rate with that of the US Fed rate of 4.5 percent.

Maynilad . . .

From page B1

Consunji said their initial thrust is to "cut the west zone into 1,300 smaller district metering areas, enabling Maynilad to measure the flow and pressure for each district."

In this manner, he said Maynilad can prioritize areas needing repair or replacement of pipes, enabling the firm to better manage the flow of water.

Maynilad currently has some 300 DMAs.

Also, Consunji said Maynilad is set to submit a proposal for rate rebasing next year.

Maynilad holds a 25-year concession granted by the state-led MWSS to provide water in the west zone of Metro Manila.

Shares . . .

From page B1

shares valued at P3.0 billion ($71.8 million).

"We were down for four days so a technical bounce was expected," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities. "But investors were largely uninterested in equities given Wall Street's unconvincing performance in the last couple of days."
AFP

DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Re-Bid Construction of New DBP Marbel Branch Building

1. The **Development Bank of the Philippines, Marbel Branch** through its **2007 Corporate Budget** intends to apply the sum of **Eight Million** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **The Construction of a New DBP Marbel Branch Building**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The **Development Bank of the Philippines, Marbel Branch** now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for **The Construction of a New Branch Building.** Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs on or before **January 17, 2008** at **DBP, Marbel Branch, Koronadal City** and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents **on January 24, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at DBP, Marbel Branch, Koronadal City.** Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at **DBP, Marbel Branch, Koronadal City** on or before **January 24, 2008 at 10:00 A.M.**
5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from **Development Bank of the Philippines, Marbel Branch** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **10:00 a.m** to **3:00 p.m.** on or before **January 28, 2008.**
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **Three Thousand Five Hundred (P3,500.00) Pesos**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on February 24, 2008. It shall be available from **January 28, 2008 and seven days thereafter.**
7. The **Development Bank of the Philippines, Marbel Branch** will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on **February 5, 2008, 10:00 a.m.** at **DBP, Marbel Branch, Koronadal City.**
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **February 15, 2008, 10:00 a.m.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of **Cash or Irrevocable Letter of Credit or Surety Bond** and in the amount of **1.0%, 1.0% & 2.5% of ABC, respectively** or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on **February 15, 2008, 2:00 p.m. at DBP, Marbel Branch, Koronadal City.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at **2:00 p.m. on February 15, 2008.**
9. Completion of the Works is within **180 days from the Notice to Proceed.**
10. The **Development Bank of the Philippines, Marbel Branch** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

DBP, Marbel Branch
NOECHITA ANDAYA
Koronadal City
Tel. # (083) 228-2429/228-3118
Fax # (083) 228-3667

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ELVIE EULLARAN-ALBANO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI—December 21 & 28, 2007)

POEA ADVISORY

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2, 2008,
THE POEA HOTLINES
722-11-44 and 722-11-55
WILL BE OPERATIONAL FROM
6:00 AM TO 10:00 PM
MONDAY TO FRIDAY

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
CAMARINES NORTE PROVINCIAL OFFICE

NOTICE OF COVERAGE

Pursuant to Section 7 of Republic Act No. 6657, the following landowners are hereby notified that their property/properties hereunder listed to wit:

	Landowner	Mode of Acqui-sition	Area	Title No. /TD No.	Location
1	AGUSTIN GUINTO, JR.	CA	8.2722	T-3507	Cal. Norte, Vinzons, C. Norte
2	AMPARO DELOS SANTOS	CA	15.0548	T-7050	Tugos, Paracale, C. Norte
3	APOLINAR PER	CA	16.2458	T-7968	Casalugan, Paracale, C. Norte
4	ARCADIO, AUGUST	CA	21.4726	T-9782	Alayao, Capalonga, C. Norte
5	ASIA BREWERY, INC.	CA	0.3215	T-44453	Mampili, Basud, Cams. Norte
6	AUGUSTO UBANA	CA	8.1589	T-5049	Batobalani, Paracale, C. Norte
7	BASILIO PATRICIO	CA	8.8399	P-3654	San Pedro, Jose Panganiban, CN
8	BENGUET CORPORATION	CA	13.4310	T-23108	Casalugan, Paracale, C. Norte
9	BENITO JETOMO	CA	10.5164	P-3281	San Pedro, Jose Panganiban, CN
10	BUENERNES SASOT	CA	9.3580	T-3024	Alayao, Capalonga, C. Norte
11	CRUZ, ADELAIDO	CA	19.0612	T-5780	Alayao, Capalonga, C. Norte
12	CRUZ, ADELAIDO	CA	5.2959	T-5781	Alayao, Capalonga, C. Norte
13	DAMASO FRAYNES	CA	9.2344	P-4406	Tamisan, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
14	DBP	GFI	8.6174	T-21053	Binatagan, Basud, Cams. Norte
15	DBP	GFI	3.4900	T-21063	Caayunan, Basud, Cams. Norte
16	DELFINA VENIDA	CA	23.3521	T-524	Mataque, Capalonga, C. Norte
17	DEMETRIO VILLANUEVA	CA	5.1394	P-4654	Langa, Basud, Cams. Norte
18	DOMINGO ALCANTARA	CA	8.3800	P-3792	San Pedro, Jose Panganiban, CN
19	DOMINGO DE VERA	CA	5.4729	P-6331	Caayunan, Basud, Cams. Norte
20	DOMINGO UBANA	CA	18.2124	T-3077	Daguit, Labo, C. Norte
21	DULCISIMO DELICA	CA	7.5183	T-703	San Isidro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
22	EMILIO VITO	CA	3.2972	P-9790	Malaguit, Paracale, C. Norte
23	EMILIO VITO	CA	18.3249	T-14451	Malaguit, Paracale, C. Norte
24	ERLINDA LOPEZ	CA	9.7844	T-2465	Bagumbayan, Paracale, C. Norte
25	ERLINDA REDULA	CA	11.0600	P-6164	Aguit-it, Vinzons, C. Norte
26	ERNESTO LACSON	CA	7.6400	T-17976	Daguit, Labo, C. Norte
27	ESPERANZA MAGANA	OLT	4.4845	P-2102	Gubat, Daet, C. Norte
28	ESPERANZA MAGANA	OLT	0.2943	Csd-05-001916(OLT)	Gubat, Daet, C. Norte
29	ESTELITA VDA. DE PALMERO	CA	11.3307	T-7039	Batobalani, Paracale, C. Norte
30	EUFEMIA ESPINOSA VDA DE IBASCO	CA	34.7030	T-11987	Mampurog, San Lorenzo Ruiz, CN
31	FELISA CABEZUDO	CA	2.2805	P-6961	Cahabaan, Talisay, C. Norte
32	FERNANDO PAJARILLO	CA	6.5106	T-10823	Mal-Basud, Labo, Cams. Norte
33	FERNANDO PAJARILLO	CA	4.9277	T-7780	Aguit-it, Vinzons, C. Norte
34	FRANCISCO BALCE	CA	18.6590	P-10275	Cal. Norte, Vinzons, C. Norte
35	FRANCISCO BARRIOS	CA	8.6053	T-5748	Exciban, Labo, C. Norte
36	FRANCISCO BARRIOS	CA	7.2169	T-5335	Macogon, Labo, C. Norte
37	FULGENCIO BADAGUAS	CA	5.0294	T-5633	Guinatungan, Basud, Cams. Norte
38	GLORIA CRISOSTOMO	CA	7.9636	T-15536	Dagotdotan, San Lorenzo Ruiz, CN
39	GLORIA NACARIO	CA	5.8520	P-6598	Caayunan, Basud, Cams. Norte
40	GUILLERMO CHAVEZ	CA	9.2059	T-4797	Batobalani, Paracale, C. Norte
41	IGNACIO VASQUEZ/APOLONIA GADAL	CA	15.3008	P-4704	San Pedro, Jose Panganiban, CN
42	INES ADEM	CA	5.9010	P-6715	Caayunan, Basud, Cams. Norte
43	IRENEO AGON	CA	23.7833	P-835	San Rafael, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
44	ISIDRA GUINTO BALCE	CA	3.3266	P-4882	Sto. Domingo, Vinzons, C. Norte
45	ISIDRA GUINTO BALCE	CA	1.4982	P-4881	Sto. Domingo, Vinzons, C. Norte
46	JACRITO DAYAWON	CA	11.6073	P-6145	Caayunan, Basud, Cams. Norte
47	JESUS BARATTA/DBP	CA	21.0156	P-3410	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
48	JESUS TYPOCO	CA	4.4273	T-6482	Laniton/Binatagan, Basud, CN
49	JOSE CUYUGAN	CA	18.4681	P-2667	Luklukan Sur, Jose Panganiban, CN
50	JOSE CUYUGAN	CA	4.8965	T-6953	Luklukan Sur, Jose Panganiban, CN
51	JOSE CUYUGAN	CA	14.6429	T-7316	Sta. Cruz, Jose Panganiban, CN
52	JOSE CUYUGAN	CA	10.3058	T-4784	Larap, Jose Panganiban, CN
53	JOSE CUYUGAN	CA	3.0251	T-7097	Osmeña, Jose Panganiban, CN
54	JOSE CUYUGAN	CA	10.1759	T-37837	Salvacion, Jose Panganiban, CN
55	JOSE MOJAL	CA	17.0312	T-10919	Luklukan, Jose Panganiban, CN
56	JOSE PAQUE	CA	20.2310	P-343	Angas, Basud, Cams. Norte
57	JUAN EVIA	CA	21.2219	P-1885	Sta. Cruz, Jose Panganiban, CN
58	JUAN GONZALES	CA	8.3712	P-2268	Sta. Cruz, Jose Panganiban, CN
59	JUAN RUBEN Q. VILLALUZ & MA. LOURDES Q. VILLALUZ	CA	16.5667	T-22960	Mabilo II, Labo, C. Norte
60	JUANA BALON	CA	1.0015	T-10081	Sto. Domingo, Vinzons, C. Norte
61	JUANITA BALON	CA	3.8992	P-7768	Cal. Norte, Vinzons, C. Norte
62	JUANITA BALON/HRS. OF FRANCISCO BALON	CA	2.0414	P-7769	Sto. Domingo, Vinzons, C. Norte
63	JUANITA BALON/JUANA BALON	CA	1.3333	P-7784	Sto. Domingo, Vinzons, C. Norte
64	LICAUCO, LENON	CA	12.8213	T-14794	Alayao, Capalonga, C. Norte
65	LINO ENSEÑADO	CA	6.7326	P-13069	Manlimonsito, San Lorenzo Ruiz, CN
66	LOURDES OSOY	CA	12.2117	P-5149	Canapawan, Labo, C. Norte
67	MAGDALENA AYTONA	CA	17.0266	T-4745	Dogongan, Daet, Cams. Norte
68	MAGDALENA RARO-AYTONA	CA	3.2144	O-430	Alawihao, Daet, C. Norte
69	MANUEL LOPEZ, ET AL.	CA	23.6617	UT	Laniton, San Lorenzo Ruiz, CN
70	MARCIAL PIMENTEL	CA	5.2270	T-6549	Langga, San Lorenzo Ruiz, CN
71	MARGARITO LAGUNA	CA	11.7701	P-8307	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
72	MARIA ABAN	CA	8.5321	T-6003	Binatagan, Basud, Cams. Norte
73	MARIA M. ONG	CA	5.9483	T-44702	Sta. Cruz, Jose Panganiban, CN
74	MARINA QUEROL	CA	20.9959	P-3045	San Isidro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
75	MELANIA ENSEÑADO	CA	1.9531	P-10759	Manlimonsito, San Lorenzo Ruiz, CN
76	MIGUELA PAULO	CA	12.2787	P-6128	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
77	MURILLO, JESUS	CA	11.3309	T-17723	Binawangan, Capalonga
78	NANCY YU	CA	9.0311	T-10959	Tamisan, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
79	NATIVIDAD VDA. DE ALMONTE	CA	9.2800	P-4311	Macatoy, Basud, Cams. Norte
80	NEMESIA ORENDAIN	CA	0.6775	P-6809	Sto. Domingo, Vinzons, C. Norte
81	NEMESIA ORENDAIN/LUIS VICENTE CARDOZO	CA	0.8941	P-6808	Sto. Domingo, Vinzons, C. Norte
82	NEMESIO ZAMUDIO	CA	2.2747	P-9545	Capacuan, Paracale, C. Norte
83	NEMESIO ZAMUDIO	CA	1.6236	T-13962	Capacuan, Paracale, C. Norte
84	NEMESIO ZAMUDIO	CA	5.0432	P-10568	Capacuan, Paracale, C. Norte
85	NEMESIO ZAMUDIO	CA	3.2433	T-3062	Capacuan, Paracale, C. Norte
86	NICANOR HERICO	CA	10.8815	T-1800	Batobalani, Paracale, C. Norte
87	NICOMEDES PAITAN	CA	9.3590	P-8473	Luklukan Norte, Jose Panganiban, CN
88	NORBERTO CUSTODIO & GABRIELA ERA	CA	12.6749	T-216	San Rafael, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
89	NORMA OJEDA MARIPOSA	CA	1.6686	T-14920	Danao, Basud, Cams. Norte
90	NORMA OJEDA MARIPOSA	CA	4.6702	T-14921	Danao, Basud, Cams. Norte
91	PABLO IBANG	CA	7.7492	P-298	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
92	PACIFICO GAUTANE	CA	7.5467	P-6076	San Pedro, Jose Panganiban, CN
93	PEDRO DYLOCO	CA	4.0000	T-4723	Angas/Mangcamagong, Basud, CN
94	PRECIOSA CERENO	CA	9.3365	P-4305	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
95	PRIMITIVO CURIOSO	CA	7.5552	P-1201	Langa, Basud, Cams. Norte
96	RAMON GADIN	CA	8.1080	T-8108	Patag, Basud, Cams. Norte
97	RB OF PARACALE, INC.	CA	2.5600	T-54153	Caayunan, Basud, Cams. Norte
98	RICARDO COOTAUCO	OLT	4.3039	P-5057	Alawihao, Daet, C. Norte
99	RICARDO COOTAUCO	OLT	0.5239	P-5055	Alawihao, Daet, C. Norte
100	RICARDO COOTAUCO	OLT	10.7762	P-4187	Alawihao, Daet, Cams. Norte
101	ROBERTO EVIA	CA	8.0408	T-9431	San Isidro, Capalonga, C. Norte
102	ROGELIO CHAVEZ	CA	9.7776	T-3630	Cal. Norte, Vinzons, C. Norte
103	ROGELIO GAPOY & LOLITA DELOS SANTOS	CA	12.3983	T-18409	Basud, Cams. Norte
104	RONALD ANTHONY TIMONER	CA	0.6958	001-0074	D. Bolo, San Lorenzo Ruiz, CN
105	SANTIAGO BINOYA	CA	9.7249	P-2812	San Jose, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
106	SOFIO BALCE	CA	5.6080	T-5364	Cabeguas, Vinzons, C. Norte
107	TOMAS COOTAUCO	OLT	0.3587	1446/Cad-456-D	Itomang, Talisay, C. Norte
108	TOMAS COOTAUCO	OLT	0.6512	1109/Cad-456-D	Binanuaan, Talisay, C. Norte
109	TOMAS COOTAUCO	OLT	0.4039	4362/Cad-456-D	Binanuaan, Talisay, C. Norte
110	TOMAS COOTAUCO	OLT	1.3733	1637/Cad-456-D	Binanuaan, Talisay, C. Norte
111	TOMAS COOTAUCO	OLT	4.6557	OCT-P-625	Binanuaan, Talisay, C. Norte
112	TOMAS COOTAUCO	OLT	0.3856	1623/Cad-456-D	Binanuaan, Talisay, C. Norte
113	TOMAS COOTAUCO	OLT	1.0114	1036/Cad-456-D	Itomang, Talisay, C. Norte
114	TOMAS COOTAUCO	OLT	0.4531	1037/Cad-456-D	Itomang, Talisay, C. Norte
115	TOMAS COOTAUCO	OLT	0.0303	4366/Cad-456-D	Itomang, Talisay, C. Norte
116	TOMAS COOTAUCO	OLT	0.0761	4381/Cad-456-D	Binanuaan, Talisay, C. Norte
117	TOMAS VARGAS	CA	5.6026	P-3820	Macatoy, Basud, Cams. Norte
118	UND. INT. OF HONESTO DE JESUS & DOLORES DE JESUS	CA	10.1901	T-3822	Napaod, Labo, C. Norte
119	UND. INT. OF MARCOS TAGALA, PRAXEDO TAGALA & ERNIE HIPOLITO	CA	23.2732	T-22658	Dagang, Paracale, C. Norte
120	VICENTE BANAL	CA	8.4832	T-16922	Laniton, Basud, Cams. Norte
121	VICENTE ZAÑO	CA	8.3307	T-1170	Lugui, Labo, C. Norte
122	VICENTE ZAÑO	CA	10.7997	T-12118	Man-Ogob, San Vicente, C. Norte
123	VICTORIO KING	CA	5.3124	T-12665	Binatagan, Basud, Cams. Norte
124	WILLIAM AMELIA SAENZ	CA	10.5067	T-21843	Batobalani, Paracale, C. Norte
125	ZENAIDA BUENA/DBP	CA	3.5168	P-3370	Cabusay, Labo, C. Norte
126	PETRA MARQUEZ	CA	10.5794	H-1185	Angas, Basud, C. Norte
127	SERGIA PIMENTEL JARENCIO	CA	3.2143	T-4479	Bactas, Basud, C. Norte
128	SERGIA PIMENTEL JARENCIO	CA	140.2759	T-2332	Pob/Bactas/Mampili, Basud, C. Norte
129	PEDRO DYLOCO	CA	11.2291	T-6808	Tacad, Basud, C. Norte
130	PEDRO MESA	CA	23.7022	T-20770	San Isidro, Jose Panganiban, C. Norte
131	PEDRO LAMADRID	CA	13.2808	P-2590	Sta. Rosa Norte, J. Panganiban, C. Norte
132	DONATA AGUILAR	CA	11.5661	P-4887	Hamoraon, Mercedes, C. Norte
133	DONATA AGUILAR	CA	4.3252	P-1209	Hamoraon, Mercedes, C. Norte
134	CRISTINA LACEDA & ILLUMINADA DELA CRUZ	CA	1.3734	T-1390 Lot 3	Gaboc, Mercedes, C. Norte
135	CRISTINA LACEDA & ILLUMINADA DELA CRUZ	CA	18.9141	T-1390 Lot 1	Gaboc, Mercedes, C. Norte
136	CRISTINA LACEDA & ILLUMINADA DELA CRUZ	CA	2.0391	T-1390 Lot 2	Gaboc, Mercedes, C. Norte
137	CRISTINA LACEDA & ILLUMINADA DELA CRUZ	CA	1.0704	T-1390 Lot 4	Gaboc, Mercedes, C. Norte
138	VALENTIN ALBAO	CA	5.1613	T-10737	Mambungalon, Mercedes, C. Norte
139	BENITO CAPISTRANO	CA	6.2500	P-2122	Gaboc, Mercedes, C. Norte
140	MARCELO GALLARDO	CA	5.1613	T-3742	Mambungalon, Mercedes, C. Norte
141	ORLANDO LAFORTEZA	CA	3.6907	P-9162	Colasi, Mercedes, C. Norte
142	ORLANDO LAFORTEZA	CA	3.3489	P-9161	Colasi, Mercedes, C. Norte
143	NENA YANTO	CA	3.0623	T-15367	Colasi, Mercedes, C. Norte
144	JUAN YANTO	CA	2.7961	P-1913	Colasi, Mercedes, C. Norte
145	JUAN YANTO	CA	3.9173	P-1912	Colasi, Mercedes, C. Norte
146	POTENCIANA PADILLA	CA	6.0767	P-4707	Colasi, Mercedes, C. Norte
147	FE PADILLA	CA	5.6078	T-12139	Colasi, Mercedes, C. Norte

are now covered under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. Under DAR Administrative Order No. 1, Series of 2003, the right to choose the area to be retained must be exercised within Thirty (30) days from the date of Publication of the Notice of Coverage. Failure to exercise this right of retention, protest and application for exemption within the prescribed period shall be considered as a waiver right/privilege to: apply for exemption/exclusion or retention, nominate children as beneficiaries or submit evidence for determining just compensation.

Under Executive Order No. 405, we shall request the Land Bank of the Philippines to determine the reasonable Land Value of the said property being acquired pursuant to Section 17, of Republic Act No. 6657.

December 14, 2007.
Date

(Sgd.) Atty. **MIGUEL S. GRACILLA**
OIC-PARO II

(PDI—December 21, 2007)

Aboitiz Power, Vivant form joint venture

By Abigail L. Ho

ABOITIZ POWER CORP. AND VIVANT ENERgy Corp. have formed a joint venture, Abovant Holdings Inc., to administer their investments in a 246-megawatt (MW) coal-fired power plant that will start operating in Cebu in 2010.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Aboitiz Power corporate secretary Jasmine Oporto said Abovant was 60-percent owned by the Aboitizes and 40-percent controlled by Vivant's Garcia family.

Abovant, together with the Global Formosa group, would invest $400 million in the Toledo Power Station, she said.

Global Formosa is a joint venture between the Metrobank Group's Global Business Power Corp. and Taiwan's Formosa Heavy Industries.

The Abovant-Global Formosa partnership yesterday signed a shareholders agreement for the establishment of a joint venture company that would develop, construct and own the coal-fired power plant.

Oporto said the plant would help meet Cebu's growing power demand, in light of the influx of business process outsourcing firms, new hotels and large industries in the province.

The plant would also provide additional power to Atlas Mining in the Toledo-Balamban area, the Tsuneishi Heavy Industries' shipbuilding facility and the Metaphil International's modular fabrication company.

Abovant will own 44 percent of the new joint venture company, while Global Formosa will hold a 56-percent stake in it.

Formosa Heavy Industries will serve as engineering, procurement and construction contractor as well as technical partner for the power plant.

In the meantime, Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. yesterday issued the notice of award to SN Aboitiz Power Hydro Inc. for the 175-MW Ambuklao-Binga hydropower plant package.

Galoc to get new funds from Nido

NIDO PETROLEUM LTD. SAID IT MIGHT pour another $4 million or about P166 million into the development of Galoc oil field off Palawan following positive results of the latest drilling.

Joanne Williams, Nido deputy managing director, said in a statement posted on the firm's website that the first oil from Galoc was expected to flow in March 2008.

Williams said the project cost increased from $100 million due mainly to interruptions in the drilling program caused by the three typhoons that hit the area.

"The cost increase reflects a risk which is part and parcel of oil field developments, (but) the impact to schedule has been minimized," she said.

Nido found that samples from the pilot Galoc well confirmed the presence of oil in the reservoir; that there is a greater proportion of productive reservoir to nonproductive reservoir rock than was originally expected in the pilot well area; and that the reservoir's potential to contain some 23.4 million barrels of oil was verified.

Ronnel W. Domingo

The City Social Services of Mandaue City in Cebu headed by the wife of City Mayor Jonas Cortes, Mrs. Sarah Cortes is going to throw a Christmas Party for the city's indigent children on December 23, 2007.

In the spirit of the Yuletide season we would like to invite our valued clients to make pledges to provide a meaningful and joyous Christmas to Mandaue City's less fortunate children. For those who wish to participate in this welfare program may contact our office and look for Ms. Malou Espena or Ms. Mila Gatchalian through telephone numbers 897-4630 to 31.

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Empire East
Empire East Land Holdings, Inc.

NOTICE TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS OF RECORD AS OF 20 DECEMBER 2007

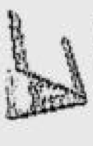
Empire East Land Holdings, Inc. ("ELI" or the "Company") is offering for subscription (the "Offer") 2,623,809,063 new Common Shares (the "Rights Shares") at an Exercise Price of P1.00 per Rights Share to existing shareholders of record as of 20 December 2007 (the "Record Date") at the proportion of 1 Rights Share for every 3 Common Shares held.

The Offer Period shall be from 7 January 2008 to 12:00 noon of 11 January 2008. The Application to Subscribe form shall be delivered or mailed to all stockholders as of Record Date. All duly accomplished subscription documents and full payment for your total subscription price should be submitted to designated branches of Banco de Oro – EPCI, Inc. before the end of the Offer Period. The Rights Shares shall be listed at the Philippine Stock Exchange on 21 January 2008.

THIS NOTICE IS FOR YOUR INFORMATION ONLY. IT DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN OFFER TO SELL THE RIGHTS SHARES. THE OFFER IS CONTAINED IN A LETTER, WITH ENCLOSED FORMS, WHICH SHALL BE MAILED OR DELIVERED TO EACH SHAREHOLDER. Each shareholder must read the complete terms and conditions of the Rights Offering at the back of the Application to Subscribe and in the Information Memorandum which may be obtained from the offices of Banco de Oro – EPCI, Inc.-Trust Banking Group located at 16th Floor, BDO South Tower, Makati Ave. cor. H.V. dela Costa St., Makati City, Telephone Number (632) 840-7000 locals 6976, 6977 and 6978.

NEC recommends Windows Vista® Home Premium.
Empowered by Innovation
NEC
New
my VERSA E6300
Run on Design
See, Hear & Touch the Differences
FaCia White / Brown Design
2.0Mega Pixel webcam with Digital Mic Array
Multimedia TnG (Touch-and-Go) Touch Pad
Comprehensive Short Cut Keys
Empowered by the latest Intel® Core™2 Duo Processor with 1GB Intel® Turbo Memory
0% Interest Free
For 12 Months

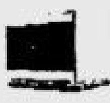
NEC VERSA E6300 / E6310 is a 14.1" designer series notebook with the latest Intel® Centrino® Duo Processor Technology that allows you to enjoy the Intel® Turbo Memory features. It incorporates a 2.0Megapixel webcam and astonishing dual digital microphone array for teleconferencing with noise cancellation audio effect. The innovative chrome blue lighted TnG touchpad has a full range of multimedia control buttons for media entertainment files and software. NEC VERSA E6300 / E6310 is ideal for multimedia enthusiasts who enjoy intense viewing and gaming experience.



NEC VERSA E6300-2000DRC
RNF41101976

- Intel® Centrino® Duo Processor Technology
  - Intel® Core™2 Duo Processor T7250 (2GHz, 2MB L2 Cache, 800 MHz FSB)
  - Intel® 945GM Express Chipset
  - Intel® PRO/Wireless 3945ABG network connection
- Genuine Windows Vista® Home Premium
- 1GB DDR2 RAM-160GB SATA (5400rpm) Hard Disk
- DVD Super Multi DL Optical Drive
- 1GB Intel® Turbo Memory
- Intel® GMA X1300 Share System Memory up to 358MB
- 4 x USB 2.0 Ports, Gigabit LAN-Bluetooth® 2.0 + EDR-6-in-1 Card Reader
- Integrated 2.0M Webcam with Dual Digital MicArray
- One-Touch Video-Conferencing SKYPE™ Activation Button -VOIP support
- Touch n Go SynapticsDual Mode touchpad
- White Leather Textured Design
- 14.1"WXGA SSV Technology
- 2.38Kg Lightweight
- 1 Year International Carry-in Warranty

Premium Design
Peso 69,900
0% Interest Free
For 12 Months



NEC VERSA E6310-2203DRC
RNF2110257E

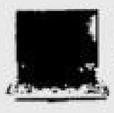
- Intel® Centrino® Duo Processor Technology
  - Intel® Core™2 Duo Processor T7500 (2.20GHz, 4MB L2 Cache, 800FSB)
  - Intel® 965PM Express Chipset
  - Intel® Wireless WifiLink 4965AGN
- Genuine Windows Vista® Home Premium
- 2GB DDR2 RAM-200GB SATA (5400rpm) Hard Disk
- DVD Super Multi DL Optical Drive
- 1GB Intel® Turbo Memory
- nVidiaGeForce8600M GS 256MB dedicated VRAM with up to 2GB nVidiaTurbo cache Video Memory
- 4 X USB2.0 Ports, Gigabit LAN, Bluetooth® 2.0 +EDR, 6-in-1 Card Reader
- Integrated 2.0M Webcam with Dual Digital MicArray
- One-Touch Video-Conferencing SKYPE™ Activation Button – VOIP support
- Touch n Go SynapticsDual Mode touchpad
- Brown Leather Textured Design
- 14.1"WXGA SSV Technology
- 2.44Kg Lightweight
- 1 Year International Carry-In Warranty

Best Performance
Peso 79,900
0% Interest Free
For 12 Months

NEC VERSA S3200-1803DRC
RNE710bb195

- Intel® Pentium® Dual-Core Processor T2130 (1.86GHz, 1MB L2 Cache, 533MHz FSB)
- Genuine Windows Vista® Home Basic
- 1GB DDR2 RAM
- 160GB SATA (5400rpm) Hard Disk
- DVD Super Multi DL Optical Drive
- Integrated 1.3M Webcam
- Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator 950 with up to 128MB
- Wireless Network Connection 802.11b/g
- 13.3"WXGA SSV Technology
- 3 X USB2.0 Ports, Expresscard Slot
- Gigabit LAN
- Bluetooth® 2.0 +EDR
- 3-in-1 Card Reader (MS/MMC/SD)
- 4 X High Definition Speakers System
- 2.01Kg Lightweight
- Cool Silver Metal Alloy
- 4 Cell Li-Ion Battery
- 1 Year International Carry-In Warranty

Best Mobility
Peso 49,900
0% Interest Free
For 6 Months



NEC VERSA L2200-1604DR

- Intel® Pentium® Dual-Core Processor T2060 (1.60GHz, 1MB L2 Cache, 533MHz FSB)
- Genuine Windows Vista® Home Basic
- 512MB DDR2 RAM
- 80GB SATA (5400rpm) Hard Disk
- DVD Super Multi DL Optical Drive
- ATI Radeon™Xpress 200M up to 128MB VRAM Shared
- 802.11b/g Wireless Connection
- RealtekRTL8100CL 10/100-15.4"WXGA SSV
- 3 x USB 2.0 Ports
- PCMCIA Card Bus Slot
- 2.5Kg Lightweight
- 4 Cell Li-Ion Battery
- 1 Year International Carry-In Warranty

Best Value
Peso 36,900

12 months on-site warranty+

intel Centrino Duo Core 2 Duo inside

EXCLUSIVELY AVAILABLE AT OCTAGON COMPUTER SUPERSTORES

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NEC Quality and Reliability www.nec-computers-ap.com/quality

Zest-O among most admired Asean firms

THE ASEAN BUSINESS AWARDS (ABA) with strategic partner, Ernst & Young, awarded four of the 12 finalists for The Most Admired ASEAN Enterprises in the recently concluded Asean Business and Investment Summit Gala Dinner in Singapore. Zest-O Corp won the award in the Innovation category and its CEO, Ambassador Alfredo Yao, received the award from Singapore Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong.

The other Most Admired ASEAN Enterprises awarded were Singapore Telecommunications Ltd (Singapore) for the growth category; CapitaLand Limited (Singapore) for the Employment category; and PT Kalbe Farma Tbk (Indonesia) for the corporate social responsibility category. The winners were short listed from 63 nominations from across the Asean region.

Zest-O Corp of the Philippines is a family corporation established in May 1981 to manufacture and distribute food products. Established as Semexco Marketing Corp, the company adopted the name of its flagship brand in 1995, taking pride in the phenomenal success of its Zest-O juice drink.

Zest-O Corp's annual sales have grown to reach P2.6 billion for 2004 with total assets of 450 million. Guided by the company's philosophy of producing quality products at affordable prices and availing it to the most number of consumers, the company has successfully diversified into different product categories over the years in terms of both sales volume as well as patronage. Zest-O also captured a significant market share in the instant noodle segment, with a leading position in many regions in the country.

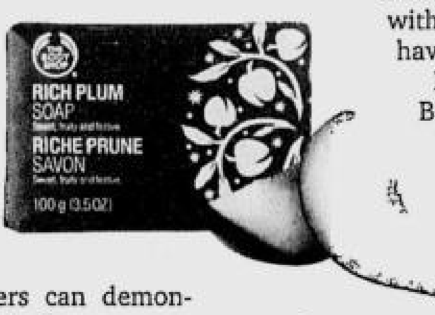
Other finalists of the Asean ABA include Nationgate Technology (M) Sdn Bhd (Malaysia) and Saigon Paper Corp (Vietnam) for growth category; Integrated Microelectronics Inc (Philippines) and Asia Commercial Joint Stock Bank (Vietnam) for employment category; Great Eastern Holdings Limited (Singapore) and Hoatho Textile Garment Joint Stock Corp (Vietnam) for innovation category; and Banyan Tree Holdings Pte Ltd (Singapore) and Johor Specialist Hospital Sdn Bhd (Malaysia) for corporate social responsibility category.

Launched in April 2007 to mark Asean's 40th anniversary, the ABA recognizes the most outstanding and successful Asean companies contributing to Asean's economic growth and prosperity. Global professional services firm Ernst & Young helped conceptualize the framework of the inaugural awards, conducted on-site interviews, and facilitated the judging process. In the Philippines, SGV & Co is the member practice of Ernst & Young Global.

The Body Shop: Feel good naturally

WHEN IT COMES TO FINDING THE PERfect presents for friends and family, The Body Shop can promise you everything on your Christmas gift "wish list" and more this year.

From our bestsellers delivered in some inspired gift selections, to our sumptuous seasonal fragrance choices for the bath, body and the home, everybody can enjoy the very best naturally inspired products and gifts.



And by choosing products from the Christmas 2007 collection, gift-givers can be safe in the knowledge that where possible The Body Shop's products contain the very best Community Trade natural ingredients. So while customers can demonstrate their ethical purchasing power, a community will benefit from its trade.

Choose from its comprehensive array of contemporary, sophisticated and indulgent products, and make it a one-stop-shop for all your gifts this year.

There'll be plenty of rich pickings this Christmas thanks to the delicious new Rich Plum Bath & Body range. The evocative sweet, fruity plum scent has been handpicked by customers as a favorite festive fragrance.

It'll also be delivering some exceptional gift collections for Christmas, putting all your festive favorite ranges such as White Musk, Neroli Jasmin, Cassis Rose, Spa Wisdom, Home Fragrance and the award-winning Body Butter range together, into tantalizing arrays of mouth-watering seasonal treats for all tastes and pockets. The great benefit of buying friends, family and loved ones its sensational seasonal gifts, is that it has all the hard work selecting the best of the best products, so you don't have to!

So be sure to make your way to The Body Shop® store nearest you, to sample the sensational gift choices for Christmas 2007 and receive this great gift with purchase offer.

Time to share, time to care

Apart from the fabulous choices this season, another great reason to buy from The Body Shop is that you don't have to trade luxury in order to purchase with a conscience, you can have both!

For every purchase of The Body Shop Christmas Gift, P1 will be donated to Kuwentuhang Bata, a literacy program being developed by The Body Shop and Unang Hakbang Foundation for the benefit of underprivileged children.

The Kuwentuhang Bata program basically works by enabling children to help other children. Here the supporting organization provides young participants with trainings and practice sessions on story telling techniques. In turn, the children themselves become community readers, providing story reading sessions and inspiring other neighborhood children to learn.

What's more, both the gift giver and receiver also benefit as they are entitled to a 10-percent discount on their next purchase of any regular item or gift. The promo is ongoing until Jan. 31, 2008.

So whether you're after pre-packed gifts, great accessories, some sumptuous seasonal home fragrance or simply want something special for yourself, step in-store and see the winter wonderland of wonderful treats that awaits you. With great gift like these, why go anywhere else this year?

APMC WINS 2007 DON EMILIO ABELLO ENERGY EFFICIENCY AWARD

Ayala Property Management Corp (APMC) has been conferred the 2007 Don Emilio Abello Energy Efficiency Award of Recognition by the Department of Energy, for energy efficiency of the Makati Stock Exchange Building (MSE), Serendra, and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Centennial Terminal 2 Complex. MSE earned Outstanding Recognition for its enercon projects. Serendra and the Naia Terminal 2 were recognized for its entry at the First Asean Best Practice Competition for Energy Management in Buildings and Industries. Shown are APMC executives receiving the award held at the Department of Energy Compound, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City Dec. 18.

'TECHNO WARS 2007'-BATTLE OF MATH AND SCIENCE WIZARDS

An advocate for excellence in mathematics and science, FEU-East Asia College invited math and science wizards from private and science high schools to its 'Techno Wars 2007'. It is a fully computerized and interactive competition, the first of its kind. The high-tech quiz format was made possible by the original software design created by the talented students of FEU-EAC. 'Techno Wars 2007' was participated in by 47 schools, wherein Rizal National Science High School emerged as the champion, Shown are Patrick Gaspar Rollan and Kevin Stanley Enriquez together with their coach Romulo B. Arada Jr as they receive their awards from Richard Jude S. Limgenco, executive director; Dr. Elsa Gerardo, director, math, physics and science; and Noel O. Rama, director, admission and external relations, all from FEU-East Asia College. After the impressive competition, all winners (from champion to 4th place) were given invitations for scholarships at FEU-East Asia College and their respective coaches were given tokens courtesy of the industry partners of FEU-EAC.

ATENEO SCHOOLS PARENTS COUNCIL HONORS OUTSTANDING TEACHERS

Ateneo Loyola Schools Most Outstanding Teachers for 2007-2008 Dr. Stephen Henry S. Totanes, Dr. Reginaldo M. Marcelo, and Dr. Gregory L. Tangonan, were honored by the Ateneo Schools Parents Council (Aspac) at the 17th Gabi ng Parangal at Pasasalamat Nov. 26 at the PLDT-CTC Room 201, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Shown are (from left): Fr. Bienvenido F. Nebres SJ (president, Ateneo de Manila University); Dr. Ma. Assunta C. Cuyegkeng (VP for Loyola Schools, Ateneo de Manila University); Daisy E. Mendoza, (Aspac, academics committee), Maria Luz R. Cabayan (Aspac, academics committee chair); Dr. Reginaldo M. Marcelo (outstanding junior teacher awardee); Dr. Stephen Henry S. Totanes (outstanding senior teacher awardee); Dr. Gregory L. Tangonan (outstanding part-time teacher awardee); Josefina Perez-Ang (Aspac president); Ruby Tongco (Aspac, special projects committee chair), Marieta M. Zee Se-Ki (Aspac treasurer), and lawyer Bienvenido E. Laguesma (Aspac vice president).

AMIGO MALL NOW IT BUILDING

Amigo Mall is now one of the pioneer IT (information technology) buildings duly registered with Peza as one of the only three buildings to be awarded as an IT building/operator on Iloilo City. As an IT operator, IT locators such as call centers and other BPO (business process outsourcing) companies can carry on their operations in Amigo Mall with special tax incentives. Being registered with Peza, Amigo Mall operates and maintains common facilities even after all available spaces have been leased out. In addition, the Amigo Mall provides specials structures such as clean and uninterruptible power supply, building maintenance systems and a high-speed telecommunication backbone. This is in conjunction with the renovation plan to create a fresh, newer look and provide better amenities to its tenants. Call centers and other IT locators are invited to operate at Amigo Mall. For inquiries, call Marie Jean P. Cordero at the Amigo Terrace Hotel & Mall, corner Iznart-Delgado Streets, Iloilo City, at (033) 508-6736/0917-5751667. Shown is Felipe Uygongco, president of La Filipina Uygongco Corp, as he receives the certificate of registration from Lilia De Lima, Director General of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza).

'Deal Or No Deal' from MSV books

IN THE GAME OF LOVE, CAN YOU MAKE A deal? Find out what choice you have to make when your heart must decide. Experience how romance can get to a high or low level depending on how much one is willing to sacrifice. Now, making decisions become both thrilling and inspiring in the new set of My Special Valentine (MSV) pocketbooks released by Bookware Publishing Corp.

This week, grab any copy of the following MSV titles "Deal of a Lifetime," "My Happy Ending," "On a Wild Night," "Conqueror of My Heart," "Kung May Pag-Ibig Pa," "Stranger's Bride," "Kilala Ka Ng Puso," "Peksman, Mahal Kita," "Wife Trap," "My Testament of Love," "On The Wings of Love" and "Princess Charming."

Incidentally, the company is inviting everyone interested in becoming a successful romance writer to send his/her manuscripts for evaluation. For inquiries, call 631-8894 or 631-7811.

The bazaar with a heart

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESSful mounting of the Seventh Noel Discovery Bazaar and Christmas Shopping Expo last November, GMA Kapuso Network and event organizer CUT Unlimited is bringing back its second part from Dec. 21 to 23 at the World Trade Center, Pasay City.

Dubbed as the "bazaar with a heart," visitors can discover unexpected finds at rock-bottom prices for their last-minute Christmas shopping.

Aside from an enjoyable shopping experience, shoppers can also help the bazaar's beneficiaries such as GMA Kapuso Foundation's Give-A-Gift Alay sa Batang Pinoy, the Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation and the Associate Missionaries of Assumption Foundation.

The second part of Noel Bazaar 2007 promises to be another unique fair with hundreds of products, fashion lines, food items for Noche Buena and gift items, home décors, novelty items, rare wares, and other exclusive finds.

There will also be exhibits on financial services, mobile technology, real estate, leisure and other amenities to help you start the New Year right.

Live performances

Live performances from the Center for Pop, a fashion show by Abbylyn and a cooking demo by MCN Taipan will spice up the three-day shopping spree.

Guests can also rummage in bargain stalls at booths of GMA Kapuso Artists.

There will also be celebrity appearances and production numbers from Bea Binene, Chynna Ortaleza, Ella Guevarra, Iwa Moto, Jana Victoria, Jen Rosendahl, John Nite, Joy Velasco, Katrina Halili, Sheena Halili, LJ Reyes and members of the "Pinoy Pop Superstar".

Noel Bazaar is presented by GMA Network, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Southeast Asian Airlines, in cooperation with the Sunday Inquirer Magazine, the Foreign Post, Barangay LS 97.1 FM, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1 and Max 103.5.

Christmas at Discovery Country Suites: The closest thing to experiencing New England

THE COOL DECEMBER AIR, COUPLED with Discovery Country Suites Tagaytay's manor-style hospitality, is the closest thing to experiencing a New England Christmas in the Philippines. From now until Dec. 31, families may avail of Discovery Country Suites' Country Holiday Package where they will be able to choose from seven elegantly-appointed suites. The Victorian-style Oxford Suite, which features a spacious master bedroom, a fireplace and a bathtub overlooking the verdant hills of Tagaytay is available for only P15,000++. The New England-themed Nantucket Suite, the Thai-inspired Siam and Japanese-enthused Nara suites are available for P 11,000++. The Andalucia, Saint-Tropez and Ceylon suites may be booked for only P10,000++. The package comes with complimentary country breakfast, welcome amenities, free-flowing wine and hors d'oeuvres during cocktail hour, and warm cookies and milk at bedtime for two persons. At Restaurant Verbena, families can experience warm chats by the fireplace while partaking of sumptuous wine and cheese spread from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Make Discovery Country Suites and Restaurant Verbena your Holiday destinations in Tagaytay. For inquiries, call Tagaytay at (046) 413-4567 or Manila at 683-8383 or log on to www.discoverycountrysuites.com.

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Cebu
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE – INFRASTRUCTURE
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City
Tel. No. 255-6123; Fax No. 253-3981

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Province of Cebu, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Infrastructure (BAC-INFRA), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contracts:

General Information

Title : Improvement / Repair of Phase 1 and Phase 2 Asphalted Roads,
Scope : Improvement and repair of existing asphalted roads

Particulars:

Package (Contract ID)	ABC (PhP)	Location	Plans and Bid Documents (PhP)
Package 1	10,617,622.30	1st District, Mainland Cebu	P 4,000.00
Package 2	21,189,680.66	2nd District, Mainland Cebu	P 10,000.00
Package 3	9,548,264.02	3rd District, Mainland Cebu	P 4,000.00
Package 4	695,364.78	4th District, Mainland Cebu	P 2,500.00
Package 5	8,730,539.26	5th District, Mainland Cebu	P 4,000.00
Package 6	1,901,502.38	6th District, Mainland Cebu	P 3,000.00

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the ABC per package, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC-INFRA will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/ Screening and in the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC-INFRA will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Submission of Eligibility Documents/Statements and Screening, Bid and Performance Securities, Pre-bidding Conferences, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract, shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

The schedule of activities is as follows:

BAC-INFRA Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	December 21-27, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	December 21-28, 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	December 28, 2007
4. Notice of Eligibility Check Results	January 3, 2008
5. Issuance of Plans and Bid Documents	January 4, 2008
6. Pre-bid Conference	January 9, 2008
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	January 21, 2008

The BAC-INFRA Secretariat will issue to prospective bidder's Eligibility Forms at the Provincial Engineer's Office, Capitol Compound, Cebu City, upon their submission of a Letter of Intent stating and specifying therein which projects they intend to undertake, and payment of non-refundable amount of Fifty Pesos (P50.00) for each project to the Cash Division. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to, and may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check from, the aforementioned address. For further inquiries, one may call the Secretariat at (032) 255-6123.

The Secretariat will issue Bidding Documents including Plans and Specifications only to bidders declared by the BAC-INFRA who are found to be eligible to bid, upon payment to the Cash Division a non-refundable amount as above-stated.

The Province of Cebu assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids and, reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding or not to award the contract.

(Sgd.) **ADOLFO V. QUIROGA**
Chairman

(PDI – December 21, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
3rd Flr., Andenson Bldg., II, Brgy. Parian, Calamba City
December 21, 2007

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s.

	Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
1.	**YKK PHILIPPINES, INC.** San Bartolome, Sto. Tomas, Batangas	Mr. Yutaka Arai/ Japanese	Vice President for Production
2.	**EBARA BENGUET, INC.** Canlubang Ind'l. Estate, Cabuyao, Laguna	Mr. Mamoru Meno/ Japanese	Vice President
3.	**SEOJIN APPAREL CO., INC.** FCIE, Brgy. Langkaan, Dasmariñas, Cavite	Mr. Dae Yeon Kang/ Korean	Logistics Manager
4.	**PILIPINAS SHELL PETROLEUM CORP.** Salcedo Village, Makati City/ Tabangao Refinery, Batangas City	Mr. Yee Pang Tsen/ Malaysian	Environmental Adviser
5.	**NESTLE PHILIPPINES, INC.** Bo. Niugan, Cabuyao, Laguna	Ms. Rebekka Thommen/ Swiss	Corporate Management Trainee
6.	**PRIME MICRO ELECTRONICS PHILS., INC.** LISP III, San Rafael, Sto. Tomas, Batangas	Mr. Jong Kil Lee/ Korean	Director
7.	**PRIME MICRO ELECTRONICS PHILS., INC.** LISP III, San Rafael, Sto. Tomas, Batangas	Mr. Hoyoung Bang/ Korean	CEO/President
8.	**PRIME MICRO ELECTRONICS PHILS., INC.** LISP III, San Rafael, Sto. Tomas, Batangas	Mr. Gun Tae Her/ Korean	Mechanical Consultant
9.	**PRIME MICRO ELECTRONICS PHILS., INC.** LISP III, San Rafael, Sto. Tomas, Batangas	Mr. Changsoo Lee/ Korean	General Plant Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, SR., CESO III
Regional Director

(PDI–December 21, 2007)

FOR HIRING

Salesman & Marketing Specialist for battery distribution.

- At least 10 yrs. experience in sales & distribution of batteries.

Send your resumé to 325 Katarungan St.
Plainview Subd., Mandaluyong City.
Look for Rascell
Tel: 747-1866 or 533-0179

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QUEZON I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Poctol, Pitogo, Quezon

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFICATION AND TO BID

QUEZELCO I is inviting interested suppliers to apply for qualification and to bid for the supply of attached CARE FUNDED PROJECTS materials.

a. PROJECT ID - 1A - Replacement of Rotten Poles (BACKBONE LINES)
b. PROJECT ID - 3 - Rehabilitation of Octopus Connection
c. PROJECT ID - 5 - Transformer Management and Power Quality

CARE FUNDED PROJECTS
C.Y. 2007

NO.	Materials Description	Qty.
1	Steel Pole 30', Standard	68
2	Steel Pole 40', Standard	80
3	Pin Type Insulator (ANSI CLASS 55-5)	215
4	Suspension Insulator, 6" clevis type	80
5	Pole Top Pin, 20"	150
6	Pin crossarm steel, 5/8"x10-3/4"	120
7	Pin crossarm steel clamp type	120
8	Machine bolt, 1/2"x6"	100
9	Machine bolt, 5/8"x10"	100
10	Machine bolt, 5/8"x8"	204
11	Machine bolt, 5/8"x14"	100
12	Machine bolt, 5/8"x18"	100
13	Single upset bolt, 5/8"x8"	111
14	Double upset bolt, 5/8"x8"	111
15	Double arming bolt, 5/8"x18"	240
16	Double arming bolt, 5/8"x22"	240
17	Oval eye bolt, 5/8"x8"	178
18	Oval eye bolt, 5/8"x10"	240
19	Bolt carriage, 3/8"x4-1/2"	100
20	Bolt thimble eye type straight, 5/8"x12"	120
21	Crossarm, 3-1/2"x4-1/2"x8'-0" (Wood)	180
22	Crossarm, 3-3/4"x4-3/4"x10'-0" (Wood)	180
23	Angle Brace, 2 x 2" x 1/4" 60 Span	150
24	Brace sidearm diagonal, 1-3/4" angle, 3/16"x7'-0"	170
25	Brace sidearm vertical angle, 50"	170
26	Washer, 2-1/4"x2-1/4"x3/16", 3/16" hole	324
27	Washer, 4"x4"x1/2", 3/16" hole	260
28	Washer, round, 1-3/8"dia. 9/16" hole	100
29	Screw lag, 1/2"x4"	150
30	Spool insulator, 1-3/4" dia. groove	304
31	Spool insulator, 3" dia. groove	150
32	Insulated Bracket	224
33	Suspension clamp, Al. Alloy Clevis, 2 Bolts #2/0 ACSR Max.	100
34	Clevis secondary swinging w/o spool	208
35	Shackle anchor, forged steel galvanized	100
36	Deadend Strain clamp, #4 To #4/0 ACSR	100
37	Clamp loop deadend, #6 To #2/0 ACSR	820
38	Hot line clamp, #2-4/0 ACSR Main To #2-4/0	100
39	Clamp guy, 3 bolt, 6" long, Heavy Duty	420
40	Eye Nut, 5/8", Conventional	150
41	Guy wire, S-M, 7-strand (M.)	762
42	Guy hook, J	240
43	Anchor Rod threaded single eye, 5/8 x 7	180
44	Anchor (creosoted log), 8"x5'-0"	153
45	Conductor #2/0 Bare ACSR (M.)	3,000
46	Conductor #2 Bare, ACSR (M.)	5,159
47	Conductor #2 Insulated, ACSR (M.)	5,159
48	Distribution Transformer, 37.5 kVA, SB, w/ Tap Changer	4
49	Distribution Transformer, 25 kVA CSP, w/ Tap Changer	5
50	Distribution Transformer, 15 kVA CSP, w/ Tap Changer	10
51	Distribution Transformer, 10 kVA CSP, w/ Tap Changer	10
52	Distribution Transformer, 5 kVA, CSP, w/ Tap Changer	19
53	Fuse Cutout with lighting arrester CL (AB Chance)	48
54	Fuse Link (Chance)	48
55	30 mm² / #2 AWG THWN/THHN Copper Wire	85
56	60 mm² / #2/0 AWG THWN/THHN Copper Wire	85

Prospective bidders have to submit their updated company profile with latest Audited Financial Statements addressed to Inocencio P. Diguidig BAC Chairman, QUEZELCO I, Brgy. Poctol, Pitogo, Quezon. Financial standing of the suppliers will be evaluated as to the capability to accomplish the said undertaking.

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders at the BAC Secretariat upon payment of non-refundable fee of P2,500.

The pre-qualification and bidding activities are as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Pre-qualification/Accreditation of suppliers Issuance of Bid-documents	December 26-28, 2007
2. Pre-bid conference	January 4, 2008, 1:00 PM
3. Opening and Evaluation of Bid	January 8, 2008
4. Notice of Award	

(Sgd.) **INOCENCIO P. DIGUIDIG**
BAC Chairman

Noted:
(Sgd.) **ENGR. CARLITO M. RUFO, JR.**
General Manager
(PDI–Dec. 21 & 22, 2007)

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
MJL LENDING & TRADING CO. 2277 Road 3 Fabie Estate, Sta. Ana, Manila	Manpreet Singh Indian	Cashier
MJL LENDING & TRADING CO. 2277 Road 3 Fabie Estate, Sta. Ana, Manila	Gurpair Singh Brar Indian	Loan Officer
PAVONIA LENDING & TRADING CO. 220 B Cordillera St., San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City	Raghbir Chand Indian	Company Collector
PAVONIA LENDING & TRADING CO. 220 B Cordillera St., San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City	Gurpreet Singh Sandhu Indian	Company Collector
PAVONIA LENDING & TRADING CO. 220 B Cordillera St., San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City	Ranjit Singh Sandhu Indian	Loan Officer
BALJAHAR LENDING INVESTOR CORPORATION 59-K 2nd St., Kamuning, Quezon City	Jaggi Sheemar Indian	Company Collector
BAL SHER TRADING INC. B-29 Lot 8 J. Luna, New Capitol Estate, Diliman, Quezon City	Pawan Doal Indian	Purchaser
CONAUTIC MARITIME INC. Rm. 312 Penthouse, Ermita Center Bldg., 1350 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila	Hubertus Frans Maria Siegers Dutch	Official Representative
YOOHAN TRAVEL & TOURS CORP. Damon Bldg., Pres. D. Macapagal Ave., Pasay City	Hee Jung Park Korean	Assistant Marketing Consultant
BLUE-EYED DRAGON TECHNOLOGY PHILS., INC. 2/F 7480 Bagtikan cor. Dao St., San Antonio Village, Makati City	Tetsuya Mizushima Japanese	General Manager
WINTER WONDERLAND ENTERTAINMENT INC. 7462 Bagtiakan St., San Antonio Village, Makati City	Guat Toh Hoe Malaysian	Manager
YBM PNT INC. 28/F IBM Plaza Bldg., Eastwood City, Cyberpark, Libis, Quezon City	Se Na Min Korean	Manager
FIRST GEN CORPORATION 3/F Benpres Bldg., Exchange Rd., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Michael Christopher Young New Zealand	Hydro O&M General Manager
ACNIELSEN (PHILIPPINES), INC. Prudential Life Guada Bldg., No. 31 EDSA, Mandaluyong City	Robert James Smith Australian	Executive Director
KIBIO 2007 CORPORATION 211 Bahay ng Alumni Magsaysay Ave., UP Campus, Quezon City	Q Sam Kim Korean	Field Manager
KIBIO 2007 CORPORATION 211 Bahay ng Alumni Magsaysay Ave., UP Campus, Quezon City	Jung Mo Shin Korean	Business Manager
KIBIO 2007 CORPORATION 211 Bahay ng Alumni Magsaysay Ave., UP Campus, Quezon City	Sung Kwon Chun Korean	President
KIBIO 2007 CORPORATION 211 Bahay ng Alumni Magsaysay Ave., UP Campus, Quezon City	Hun Park Korean	Financial Manager
KIBIO 2007 CORPORATION 211 Bahay ng Alumni Magsaysay Ave., UP Campus, Quezon City	Moon Shik Kim Korean	General Manager
CHEVRON MALAMPAYA LLC 8/F Asian Star Bldg., Asean Drive Filinvest Corp. City, Alabang Muntinlupa City	Kevin Lyon American	President
THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC COMPANY LIMITED Country Space I Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Krich Thammagul Thai	Airport Services Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC, Regional Director

(PDI–December 21, 2007)

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INVITATION TO BID

The Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative, Inc. invites qualified contractors to submit sealed bids for the repair and maintenance of the following generators.

Quantity	Units	Description of works to be done
2	units	Rewinding, re-taping of main stator, main rotor, reconditioning of exciter stator and exciter rotor. Gen set Specs: (1250 KVA/1000KW, 4160 V, three phase, 60 Hz, 900 RPM, 174 Amps). Also include final testing and commissioning in your quotation.

All interested bidders must submit their letter of intents to the INEC BAC Secretariat not later than 10:00 A.M. on December 28, 2007.

Bidding documents will be available at the BAC Secretariat Office on December 28, 2007 – January 8, 2008 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00).

A pre-bid conference will be held on January 8, 2008, 1:00, at the INEC Training Room. Submission of sealed bids will be on the following day, January 9, 2008, 10:00 A.M., at the same venue.

(Sgd.) **RODRIGOR R. AGLIAM, REE**
PBAC Chairman

Approved:
(Sgd.) **RENATO A. BALINTEC, PEE**
Officer-in-Charge
(PDI – December 21 & 22, 2007)

OBITUARIES

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
Tel. Nos. : 712-3001; 749-3806 to 11

NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION DATE & TIME	INTERMENT/CREMATION PLACE
Lydia Gella Valera (Ashes)	Chapel of the Risen Lord Capitol Park Homes, Q.C.	December 21, 2007 10:00 a.m.	St. Peter Church Crypt, Q. C.
Ace York Vergel Aguilar	Superior Chapel	December 21, 2007 2:00 p.m.	Paz Crematory

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MATILDE G. FRANCO

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 7, 2007 at the age of 98, at the Washington Hospital in Fremont, CA.

She is survived by her loving husband of 68 years, Jose. C. Franco; children Remy Gordon (husband of Glen), and Bobby Franco (wife of Gloria); five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Please pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

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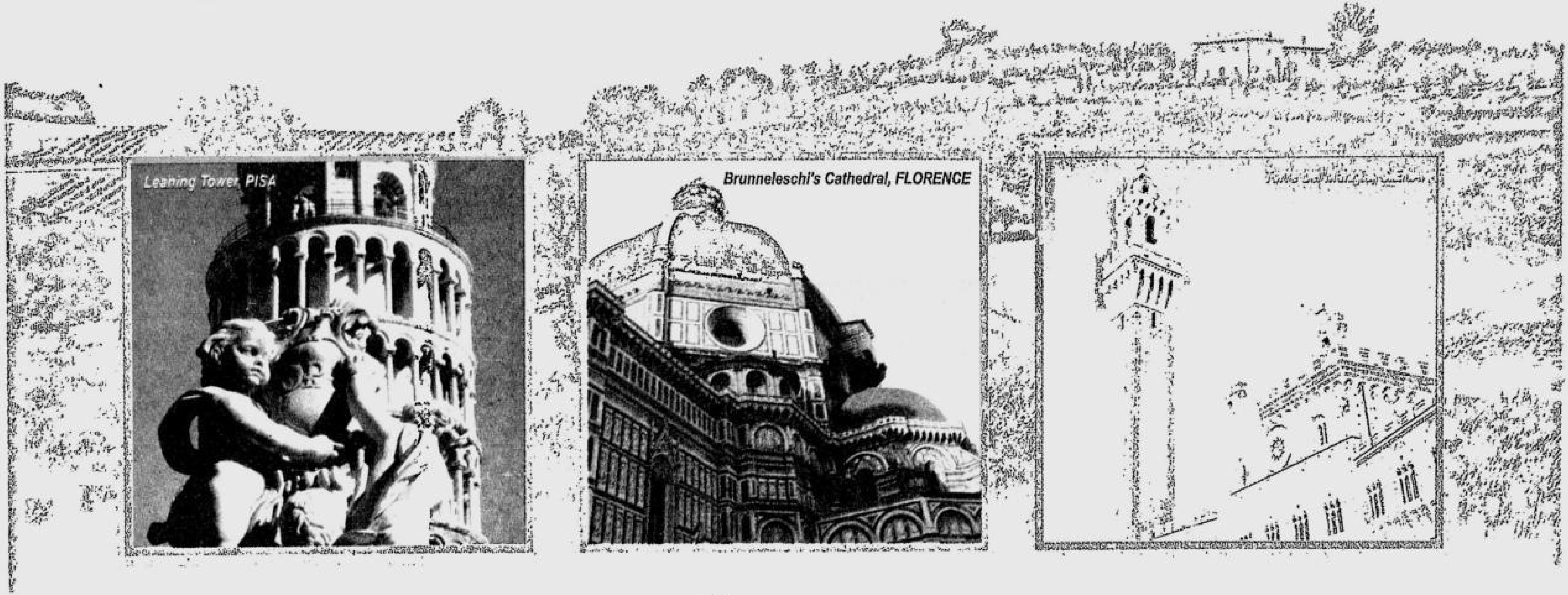
Leaning Tower, PISA
Brunneleschi's Cathedral, FLORENCE

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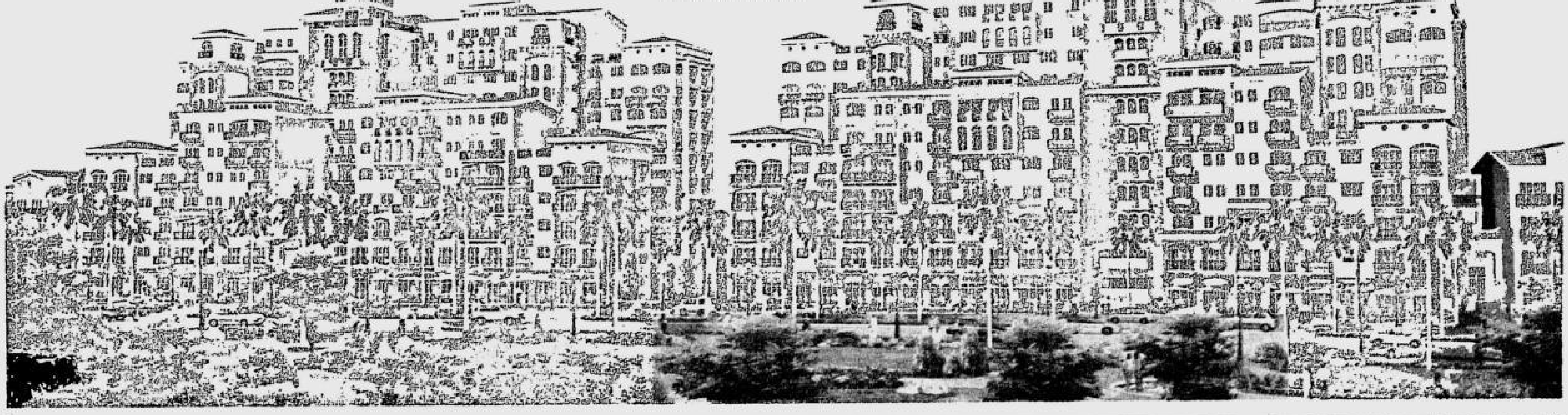

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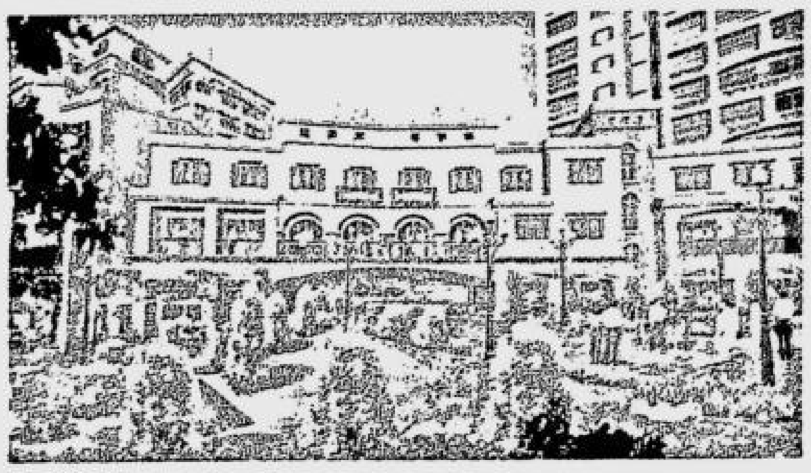

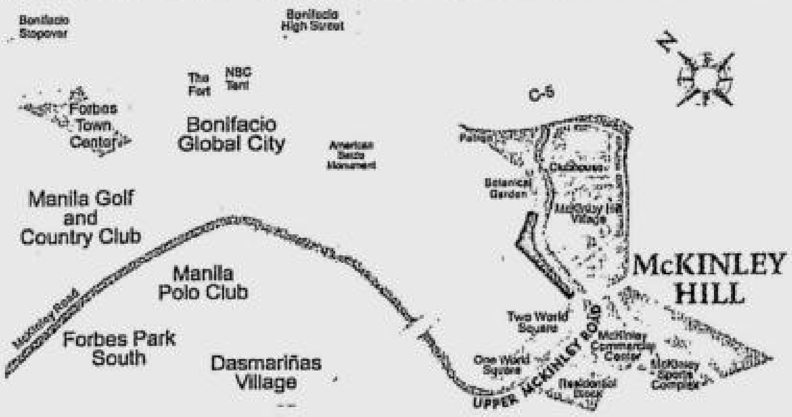
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Filipinos putting more money in franchises

Many of the franchisors are young people willing to take risks

SIBAL-LIMJOCO

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

JUST A LITTLE OVER 10 YEARS AGO, franchising was virtually unheard of in the Philippines.

For the few who were familiar with it, they thought it was a business expansion strategy limited to the big foreign food companies, such as McDonald's, Shakey's and Pizza Hut.

Franchising in the Philippines has definitely gone a long way since then, and the industry is showing no signs of slowing down, just of speeding up.

The latest data from the Philippine Franchising Association, the biggest and oldest franchising group in the Philippines, show that there are close to 900 franchises operating in the country from just 50 in 1995 and 64 percent of these are homegrown. These are largely in food, service and retail.

Franchising has thus become a major force in the economy, accounting for an estimated 15 percent of the annual retail sales of roughly $5 billion.

"Franchising has become the fastest growing sector in the country today and will continue to be a major sector in the near future," according to the book, "A Guide to Franchising in the Philippines," produced by the PFA.

Alegria Sibal-Limjoco, chairperson of the 12-year-old PFA, says in an interview that the franchising industry continues to grow in the Philippines, partly because more Filipinos are planning to put up their own businesses, especially among the youth.

Perhaps due to growing exposure to success stories of entrepreneurs who have either acquired a franchise or have become franchisors themselves, many from among the Filipino youth are willing to risk putting their money in a franchise.

"Many of these young people go to our trade shows and I like them because they are brave and are willing to try out new things and go into a business, even if they are also employed at the moment," Limjoco explained.

She added that with more Filipinos below 30 becoming more exposed to new trends in food or fashion through the Internet and travels abroad, they get to experiment new ideas in the market place.

There is always that possibility that some of these new ideas will become the next Jollibee or Bench—two of the biggest names in the Philippine franchising industry.

The industry is also expected to become a major dollar earner because of the royalty paid collected by Filipino brands now operating in foreign markets.

These include Jollibee (food), Chowking (food), Islands Souvenirs (novelty goods), Hotshots (food), Reyes Haircutters (salon services), Figaro Coffee (food), Video City (video sales and rentals), Crystal Clear (purified water), Kamiseta (apparel) and Netopia Internet Café (Internet services).

Armando Bartolome, one of the Philippines' leading franchise consultants, expects more Filipino companies to become franchisors outside the Philippines as part of their expansion strategy.

"Franchising is definitely a growing market. Every month, there are entrepreneurs starting to expand via franchising. More and more Philippine companies that are franchising here are now inspired to expand beyond the shores like within the Asean region, Middle East and North America. I could see that within the next decade, almost all businesses will be into franchising," Bartolome said.

This entails some tweaking of the concepts to suit foreign markets, according to Pacita U. Juan, CEO of Figaro Coffee Corp., which has branches in China.

Juan, an officer of the Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc., says gone are the days when franchise companies employed a cookie cutter approach to franchising, which means that one system will work for all territories.

With competition, she says more franchisors have learned to adapt their operations to suit the market where they are operating in.

Figaro, for instance, had to modify its dessert offerings to go with the coffee in China because the Chinese have a lower tolerance for sweets compared to Filipinos.

Foreign franchises have adopted the same approach in the Philippines.

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Digital photos are in, but developing photos is king

Local dealer says that for this year, 122 billion photos have been printed worldwide

WITH THE FAST AND ASTONishing developments in the digital world, photographic imaging has become an even more complicated venture. New technologies come out of the digital woodwork along with a new set of need-to-know systems and procedures, more complicated than the ones before.

Columbia Digital Sales Company's CEO Anderson Tan, knowing this all too well, has diminished the guesswork by offering the best and most user-friendly brands—a move that makes the latest technological advancement significant in the lives of consumers.

On Jan. 19, 2006, when Konica Minolta decided to liquidate its photo imaging division, Tan saw the episode as an opportune time to step up the company's operations to better cope with the fast-changing developments in photographic technology. With his father, Benito, handing over the reins of the Columbia Global Sales Company to him, Tan acquired a new name to go with his vision: Columbia Digital Sales Company.

The new company captures Tan's vision to expand its services, while keeping a leaner and more efficient workforce, and maximizing its resources. Customer care being a paramount objective, Tan saw to it that the staff, especially those in sales, is more knowledgeable in product features and better equipped in dispensing service like SAP business, the number one computer system in the world.

Columbia Digital Sales Company is also the co-distributor of the high-end Fujifilm line. The Fujifilm line is still the world leader in the film sector producing high performance films and the current market leader in the Philippines with 60 percent market share.

Aside from the legacy of quality inherent in Fujifilm, Columbia Digital Sales Company also acquired the exclusive distributorship of brands like Nikon, Aigo, Kis Photo-Me and Doli Digital Mini Lab.

"By offering top-of-the-line products, we assure the public of impeccable quality and excellent performance from every item that they buy from the company," stresses Tan.

Leading the product line-up is Nikon which, as Tan describes it, is "the BMW of cameras." To open out the unique Nikon technology to a wider audience, the brand recently introduced seven new cameras to their Coolpix family.

On the other hand, entry-level shutter bugs and members of the style-conscious XYZ generation will delight in Aigo Digital Cameras. The sleek, handy styling and digitally-attuned features sit well with today's young photo enthusiasts who are keen on recording memories through a digital format.

Those who thought that developing photographs will become a thing of the past with the advent of digital technology could not have been more mistaken. "A lot more people are developing photos. This year alone, 122 billion photos have been printed worldwide. And the new gadgets are making photo printing a lot easier because images can be captured more readily. Aside from printing from digicams, they can also print the images they took using their cell phones, or images stored in their memory cards," he says.

To help print photos more creatively, Tan brought in the sophisticated French brand Kis Photo-Me Digital minilabs. The minilabs provide photo developing entrepreneurs with a portfolio of solutions guaranteed to boost customer turnover and profit margins.

Columbia Digital Sales Company is the natural progeny of Columbia Global Photo Sales Corp. which evolved from the Columbia Global Far East Lab: A pioneer in the Philippine photo industry established by Tan's father Benito in the late '70s.

After setting up his first Columbia One-Hour photo shop in Quiapo with the help of his sisters and brother, he went to Japan, checked into a cheap hotel and took hold of the yellow pages. One by one, Benito scoured the pages under photographic supply and started contacting possible suppliers. With his gift of gab and powers of persuasion, Benito came back home with contracts for the exclusive distributorship of photo equipment, cameras and films safely tucked in his hands. He became the exclusive distributor of Nikon cameras, and Sakura films and cameras. Later when Sakura camera became Konica Minolta, Columbia Global Photo Sales became its exclusive distributor in the country.

Benito worked assiduously to keep Columbia Global Photo Sales at the forefront of the photo supply and service industry by indoctrinating his sales team on the values of excellent service and exemplary customer relations.

Benito's son Anderson Tan is a restless visionary with very high ambitions. Tan has enriched these inherited lessons by pursuing his education abroad and attending advanced studies in reputable business institutions. He earned his degree in Business and Information Management from the prestigious Oxford Brookes University in the UK. He got his certificate in the Essentials of Management from Wharton University in Pennsylvania. He also attended the Leadership Development Program at the Center of Leadership Training, and completed the Mastering alternative Investments at Insead, both in Singapore. He plans to study more as he believes life is all about learning and improving one's self.

TAN

Catering to a few who can afford it

Text and Photo
by Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

BORACAY ISLAND—BARELY A year after it opened on this world-famous island-resort, Discovery Shores Boracay has already found a niche market among high-end domestic and foreign tourists.

The luxury hotel has recorded a high average occupancy rate since it began operations in March, according to Annabel Wisniewski, president of Hotel Systems Asia Inc. (HSAI)-Raintree which runs the hotel. "We have exceeded our projections," she says.

Room rates range from $210 to $600 a night, but hotel general manager Jose Parreño Jr. says that while these were higher than those of around 300 resorts and hotels on the island, Discovery Shores had attracted guests seeking world-class accommodations.

High-end Filipino tourists comprise 80 percent of the guests, Parreño says. Among the foreigners, Koreans make up the bulk, followed by Russians.

Discovery Shores is near Boat Station 1 at the northern tip of the white beach of the 1,032-hectare island. It is the first hotel in the Philippines to become a member of the elite Small Luxury Hotels of the World.

It has 88 fully furnished suites and a 14-meter waterfall. Next month, it will open its 15 lofts, each equipped with Jacuzzi whirlpool bath tubs.

Discovery Shores is the newest hotel opened by Southern Visayas Property Holdings Inc. (SVPHI), which also owns the 225-room Discovery Suites at the Ortigas Center in Pasig City and the seven-room Discovery Country Suites in Tagaytay City.

Wisniewski says the Boracay investment was "un-programmed," coming eight years after the opening of Discovery Suites, "but we saw the need for a luxury hotel that would match the quality of the beach and the beauty of the island."

She says the company recognized that luxury hotels still had an unserved market, especially in Boracay.

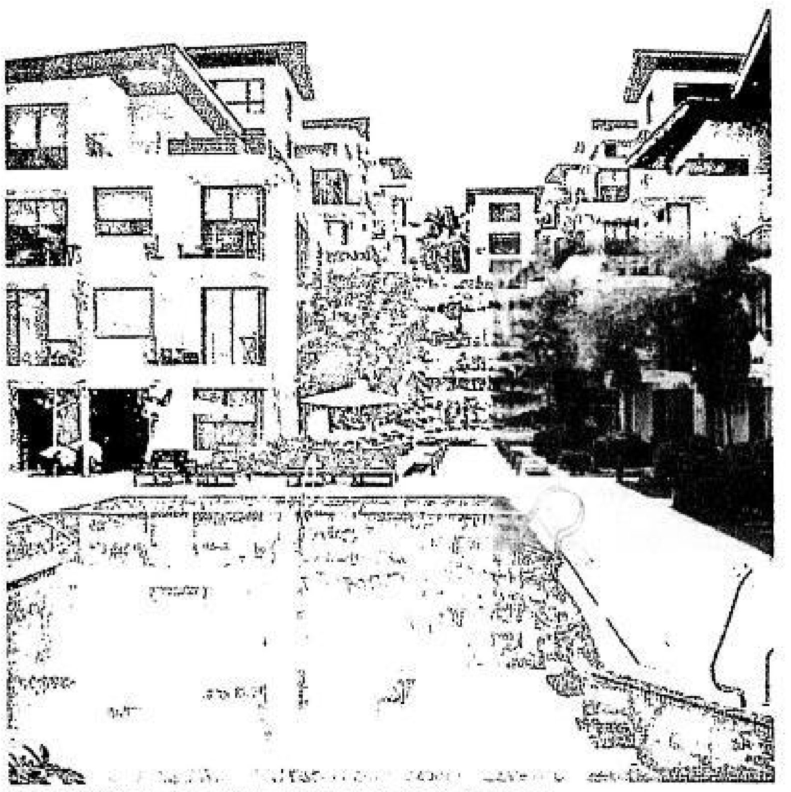
Discovery Shores' amenities and services have helped raise hotel standards on the island, Parreño says. These include plasma TV sets, iPod stations and DVD players in each room, customized beds, and imported pillows and linens.

Starting next month, the hotel will offer services of the internationally awarded Mandala Spa.

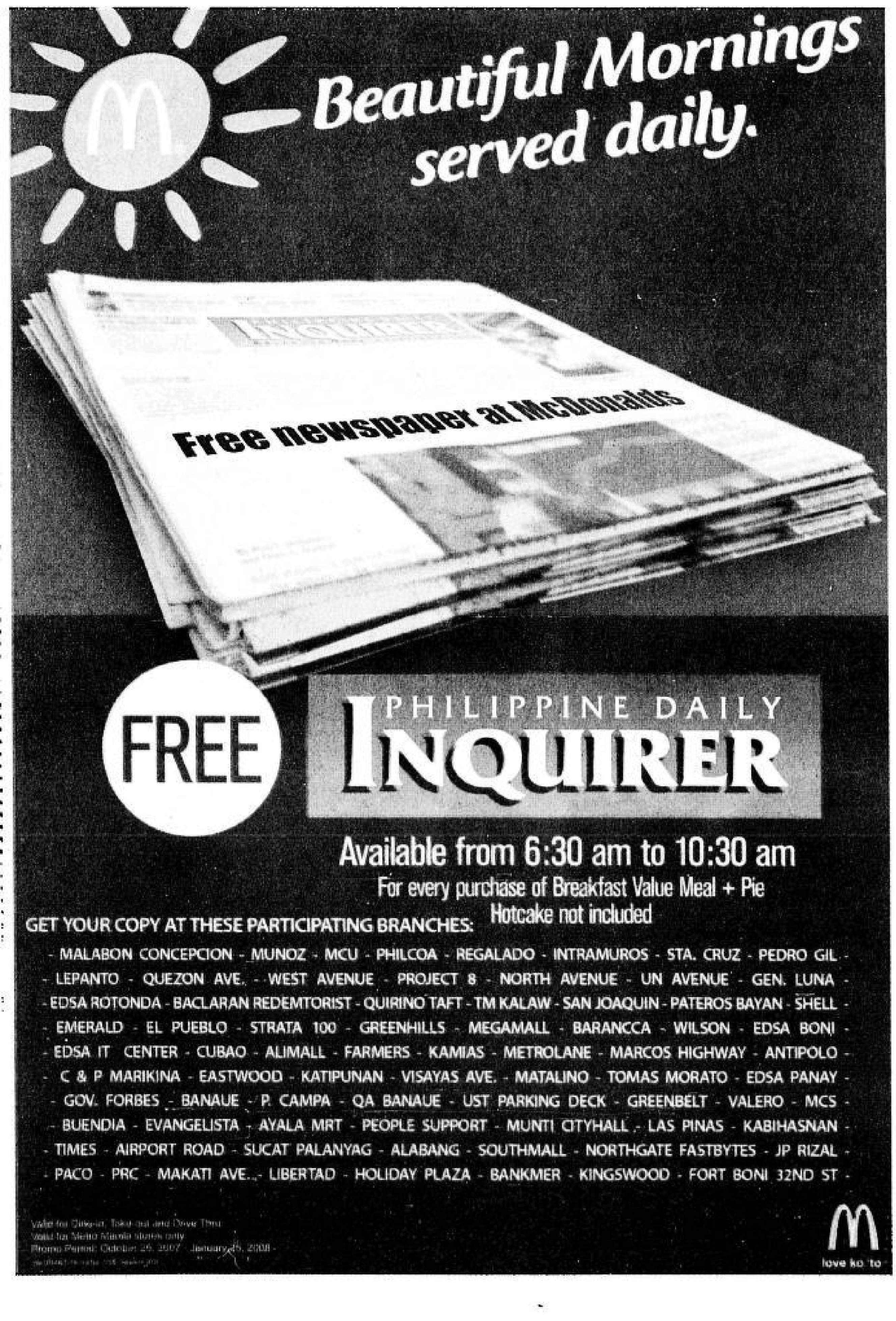
Parreño says the raising of standards was critical as tourist arrivals continued to increase. The number of tourists in Boracay reached 567,421 last year, or 13.6 percent higher than the 499,457 recorded in 2005.

Tourism revenues reached P10.18 billion last year, or 24.44 percent higher than the P8.18 billion in 2005.

The island-resort was included in the 10 Best Beaches in the World in Conde Nast magazine. This year, it was cited as one of the 30 best beaches in the world in the July issue of Island magazine.



THE FRONT view of Discovery Shores in Boracay.



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Filipinos putting more...

From page B2-1

McDonald's, for instance, has had to expand its fried chicken line because Filipinos buy more fried chicken than hamburgers.

Bartolome, meanwhile, says that the composition of the franchising industry has likewise changed over the past decade.

"Before, when one speaks of franchising, what comes to the mind of many would be food. Everybody wanted to jump into the bandwagon of getting a food franchise," Bartolome says, "What I find emerging is the service industry, the likes of salons, pre-schools, tutorials, spas, laundry shops. The population is now looking for convenience."

PFA's Limjoco offers the same view and sees bright prospects in the services sector, especially those concepts related to tourism and business process outsourcing.

Limjoco says that as the Philippine government succeeds in its campaign to bring in more tourists to the Philippines, new franchise opportunities would necessarily crop up, such as new budget hotel concepts and souvenir shops.

The business process outsourcing sector is another sunshine industry in the Philippines and it has spawned related businesses, such as schools put up to train Filipinos to speak better English so they can get a high-paying job in a call center.

"I see big opportunities in the BPO sector because it is expected to grow by 300 percent by 2010. As such, the sector offers very good franchising prospects not just in training but in other areas as well," Limjoco says.

She also expects great potential in franchises within the health and wellness sectors, such as spas, salons and restaurants and food outlets catering to the more health conscious individuals.

Of course, the traditional food, fashion and "fun" sectors will always remain a major force in the franchising industry, but other concepts are getting their fair share of the market.

Aside from the change in the composition of the franchising industry, experts also see some changes in the value of the franchise concepts in the market.

There was a time when only franchise investment packages worth at least P1 million were available to entrepreneurs, whether foreign or Filipino.

Today, franchise concepts are offered by successful small and medium-scale enterprises for below P50,000, such as water-refilling stations, beauty salons and food businesses in kiosks, carts and stalls.

The PFA says in its book that due to standards, modern technology and better management systems, franchising has helped improve the productivity of SMEs, enabling them to expand more rapidly.

This is proven by the boom in the number of franchises in the form of kiosks or stalls, which have also expanded outside the capital of Metro Manila to take advantage of opportunities in the provinces.

But perhaps the main reason behind the success and growth of the franchising sector in the Philippines is the great profit potential.

This was true when franchising came to the Philippines in 1910 when Singer Sewing Machine offered distribution licenses or produce distributorships, and it remains true today.

It does not matter if the franchise is small or large. It has long been proven that riding on a proven business concept is still less risky than putting up a business from scratch.

As PFA said in its book, franchising in the Philippines has been enjoying a high success rate of 90 percent, which is far better the general retailing industry's success rate of just 25 percent.

Not all franchise concepts, however, are created equal. Some are definitely better than others. It is the potential franchisee's job to do his homework and really study the business.

In short, investigate before investing. In this way, the future of the franchising industry in the Philippines will become even more robust than it already is today.

Marketing Rx

From page B2-4

just another minimum requirement." So this is what you ought to watch closely: The eventual co-owning by other competing brands of an originally unowned dimensionalized attribute at some starting point.

Pointers

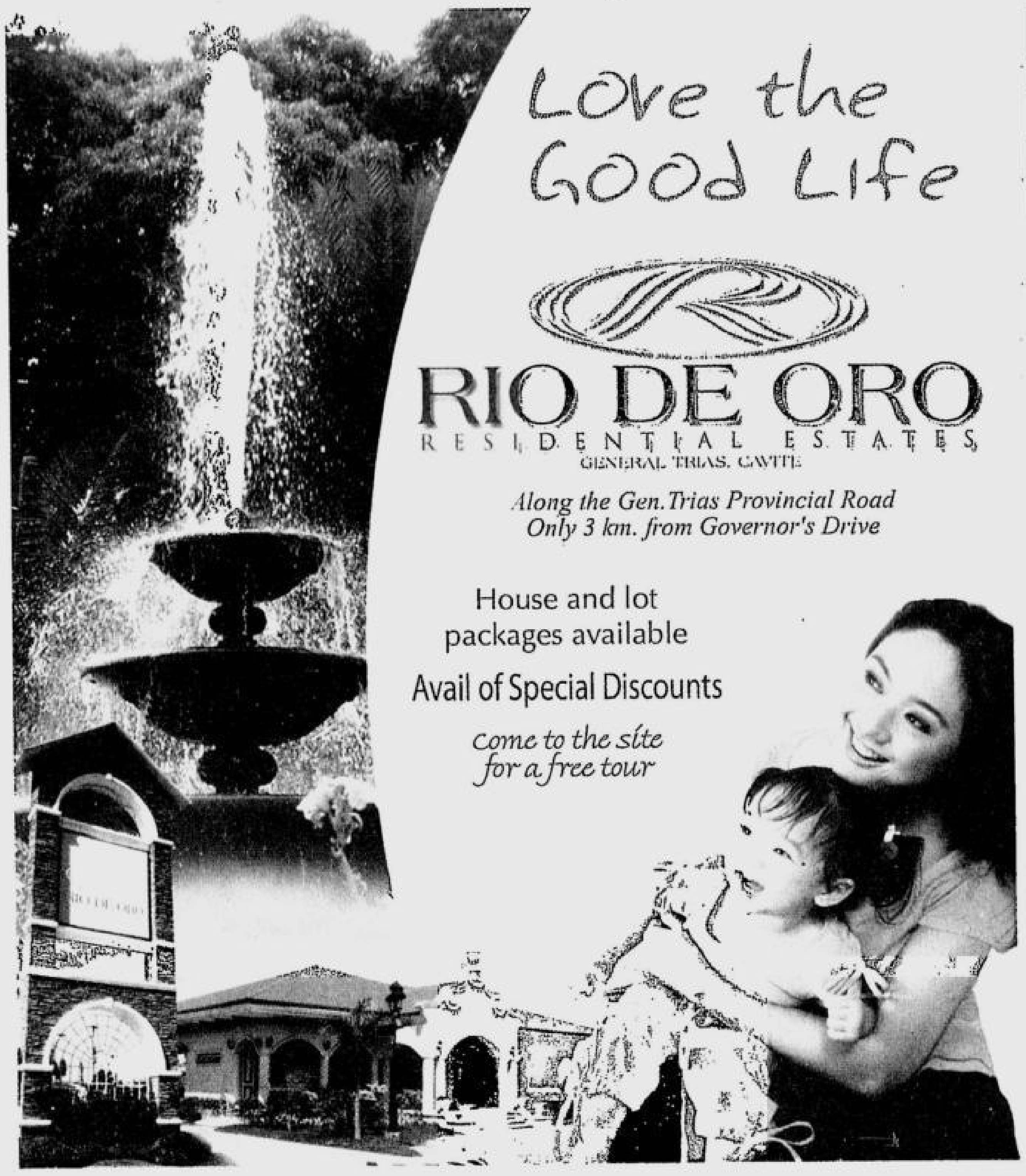
In the process of arriving at the preceding answers, we also derived some crucial recommendations for you to observe:

First, know the continually expanding minimum requirements of the product category where your brand belongs.

Second, make sure that your brand continues to deliver, and maintains delivery of these accumulating minimum requirements to your target consumers. If you don't you risk losing on the first part of the motivating positioning game.

Third, avoid the strategic error of positioning in an attribute that consumers have come to regard as definitely a minimum requirement. If you do, you have wasted resources in that positioning option since a minimum requirement attribute by definition is not a motivator but only a demotivator.

Send questions to MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net. God bless and have a Merry Christmas!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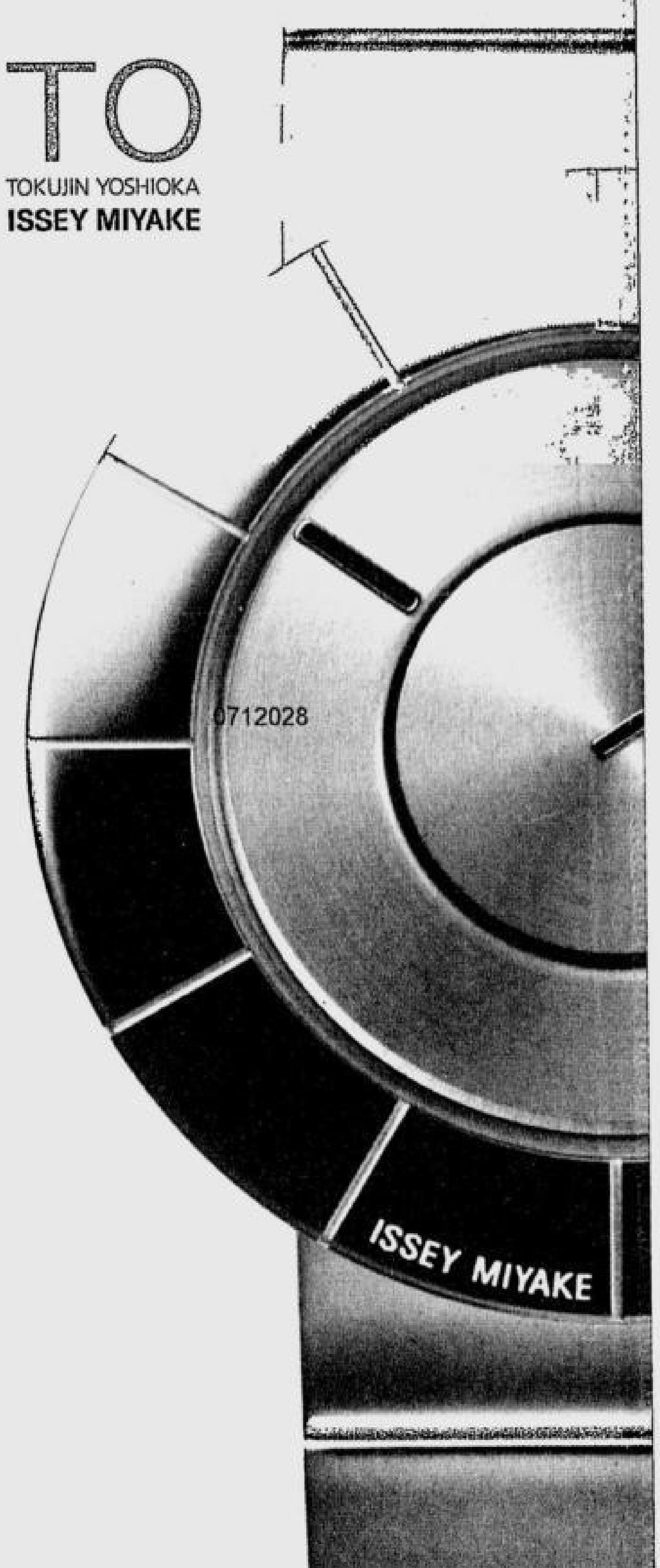

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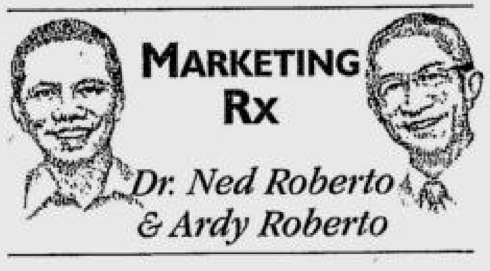
On product attributes and purchase motivators

Make sure that your brand continues to deliver



MARKETING Rx

Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

Q: WE'RE IN A FAST MOVING MARKET. Every so often, new products are introduced as well as next generation products. That's not to mention existing and even old product relaunches. There are also continuing changes in pricing, consumer and trade promo, advertising and positioning and repositioning. Marketing at the retail store level is also rapidly changing. We're particularly concerned about our line of "old" products and our more recently launched new products.

There was a marketing association conference where you spoke about "minimum requirement product attributes." You warned us that while remaining as consumer priority needs, these attributes can no longer be purchase motivators. But how do we know or measure if a product attribute where one of our brands is currently positioned is already a minimum requirement? In that conference, you mentioned the use of the UAI (Usage Attitude Image) survey for this purpose. But our UAI research budget allows for only a once-a-year UAI. And as we've already mentioned, we're in a fast moving market. So how can we know even before the UAI, say, 3 months, 6 months or even 9, 10 months before?

A: You have at least two set of things in your question. First, there are things to clarify. It's after this that we can then answer your two related questions.

While we have in a previous column talked about a minimum requirement product attribute, we should clarify again. A product attribute (also called "product value," "product need," "product benefit-feature") becomes a minimum requirement when almost all major competitors or all of them are already satisfying consumers on the attribute in question. Because the attribute is already satisfied by all brands, even when it remains as high in importance to consumers as before, it no longer is a motivator. That's because consumers have come to regard it as generic to the product category. Let's talk specific to understand.

Minimum product attribute

Consider, for example, the toothpaste attribute, "prevents cavity." Consumer surveys tell us that consumers when asked about this attribute say: "A toothpaste is supposed to prevent cavity. If it doesn't, then it's something else." What does this mean in terms of consumer satisfaction?

When your brand delivers on the "prevents-cavity" attribute, consumers take that for granted. That's because (as they say) "a toothpaste is supposed to do that." You don't make consumers happy when your brand prevents cavity. However, if your brand does not prevent cavity, consumers become unhappy. And it's for the same reason: You're supposed to prevent cavity and you aren't. So a minimum requirement attribute is therefore basically a "dissatisfier" but not a "satisfier." It's a demotivator but not a motivator.

A toilet soap client once asked us: "So for toiler soap, is the functional attribute, 'cleans,' our minimum requirement?" Our research on this attribute revealed that it's not. It's true that it's a generic attribute of toilet soap but consumers have done something else to this attribute which they did not do to the prevents-cavity attribute in toothpaste.

Consumers have "dimensionalized" the attribute "cleans." To them there are several kinds of clean: Germ-free clean, fragrant clean, pure clean and fresh clean. This makes all the difference in consumer motivation. Not all of these kinds of clean are already satisfied by all toilet soap brands or owned by a specific brand except "germ-free clean." That's Safeguard's equity or ownership. But for the others, it's open competition especially "fresh clean" … at least eight years ago when this consumer survey was done.

This second insight into a minimum requirement product attribute tells brand people that once consumers dimensionalize, the generic attribute they've dimensionalized becomes irrelevant in the positioning game. The positioning options now migrate to its dimensionalized specifics or kinds.

Positioning gaps

The motivating attributes are the kinds that no one brand owns yet. Those are the so-called "positioning gaps." The brand which excels others in delivering superiority in any such gap becomes its owner. That's true until the time when other brands match the owning brand's superiority. Then, the dimensionalized attribute becomes just another minimum requirement.

It follows from the foregoing discussion that over time, and for any one product category, the minimum requirement attributes accumulate. As they add up, the search for a superior positioning gets more and more difficult. At the same time, marketers must continue to delivery and maintain delivery to the target consumers of the continually accumulating base of minimum requirement attributes.

This is why in our seminar on positioning, we always open the seminar by asking participants to list down all the minimum requirement attributes of their major or market leader brand. Sadly, in 8-9 out of 10 participants, we get a very thin list or an incomplete list. This is one of the most (if not the most) neglected fundamental brand management responsibilities of a marketer.

We're now ready for your two related questions. We can source from the foregoing clarification and analysis, the answers to those questions. We now restate your two questions in their combination as follows: "How do we know or measure if a product attribute where one of our brands is currently positioned is already a minimum requirement … even before the UAI, say, 3 months, 6 months or even 9, 10 months before?"

First, look at the definition of a minimum requirement attribute particularly the portion that says: "…almost all or all competitors are already satisfying consumers on the attribute in question." So a quick way of knowing is to look at the competing brands' attribute in question, and if almost all competing brands are doing well in delivering on that attribute, you can then be 50-60 percent confident that you're dealing with a minimum requirement.

Why 50-60 percent confidence only? That's because you have to check on the qualifying explanation we gave in the case of the toilet soap. We said: "Once consumers dimensionalize, the generic attribute they've dimensionalized becomes irrelevant in the positioning game. The positioning options now migrate to its dimensionalized specifics or kinds. The motivating attribute/s are the kinds that no one brand owns yet."

So, check if consumers now speak of a candidate minimum requirement attribute no longer in its generic name but in its specific kinds or dimensions. If they do, then such candidate minimum requirement attribute has reinvented itself (so to speak). But check every now and then those dimensionalized attributes. Our analysis said: "The brand which excels others in delivering superiority in any such gap becomes its owner. That's true until the time when other brands match the owning brand's superiority. Then, the dimensionalized attribute becomes

MARKETING RX/ B2-3

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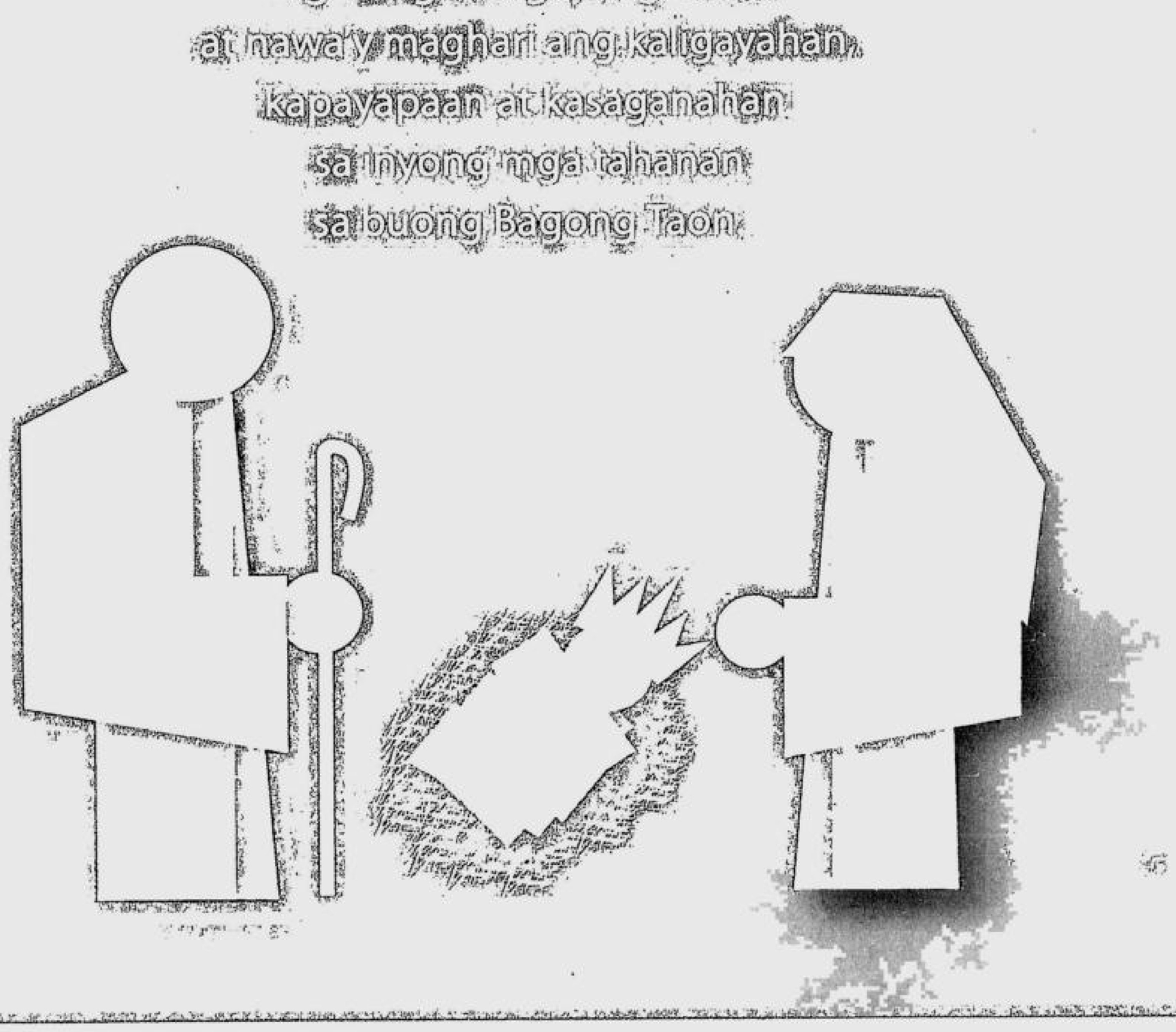
na dahil sa Kanyang
malaking pagmamahal sa atin
ay nagpakumbabang
nagkatawang tao
upang maging
ating Tagapagligtas.

Malugod namin kayong binabati
ng isang Maligayang Pasko
at nawa'y maghari ang kaligayahan,
kapayapaan at kasaganahan
sa inyong mga tahanan
sa buong Bagong Taon.



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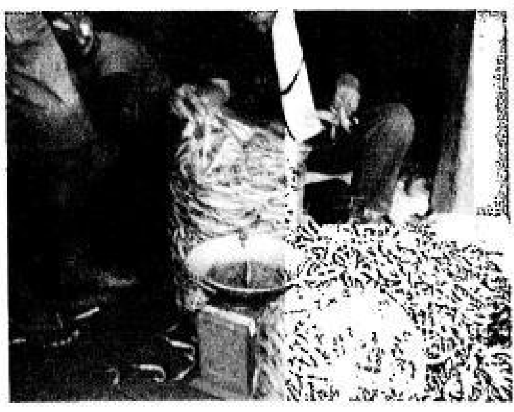
This Pangasinan city never sleeps



THE BAGSAKAN market also gives jobs to porters from the city.

Where local heads claim vegetable prices are lower than in Divisoria

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

URDANETA CITY—SOME cities do not sleep, this one included.

For 24 hours daily, trucks and other vehicles load and unload vegetables and fruits; wholesalers, traders and retailers haggle over prices; "*kargador*" (porters) carry backbreaking loads of tomatoes, *pechay*, onions, string beans, *okra*, eggplant, *ampalaya*, citrus, *lanzones*, bananas and many other farm produce, over their shoulders.

Welcome to the Urdaneta "*bagsakan*" (trading center) market where you can find a wide variety of fruits and vegetables from different provinces and which are sold at low prices.

"Daily, some P5 million to P10 million exchange hands here," says Mayor Amadito Perez Jr.

The bagsakan market is very popular among traders as most times, the prices are even lower than those in the Divisoria market, he says.

Traders from Manila come here to do business, he adds.

The trading center was an offshoot of the city's cattle market which started after World War II.

Urdaneta, then a town, had no definite area for cattle selling and business was done at the plaza and near the municipal hall, Perez says.

People from Luzon provinces were coming here, he says, and they would buy "*bagoong*" (fish sauce from Lingayen town) to bring to their provinces.

Soon, the cattle traders from the provinces were bringing vegetables and other farm produce to sell at the market and buy those brought by the other traders.

By word of mouth, the news spread that vegetables and fruits were sold in bulk in Urdaneta, and soon, not only cattle traders were buying and selling the farm produce but wholesalers as well.

The city has a big cattle market now beside the new city hall, but there is still no definite bagsakan market. People traded in makeshift stalls lining several streets in the downtown area. In 1994, the city built a market but the business has persisted along the streets which are almost always clogged with people and vehicles.

Wholesalers stationed at the bagsakan market usually buy all the produce brought here by truckloads. Then traders from all over Pangasinan and the provinces would come to buy different kinds of vegetables and fruits.

"Each has his own '*suki*' (regular customer)," Perez says.

Fruits and vegetables from as far as Davao (pomelo, banana), Batangas (lanzones), Laguna (dalandan or native oranges), Bukidnon (tomatoes) are unloaded here, he says.

The products are then taken to the different towns in Pangasinan and other Luzon provinces.

Market supervisor Cesar Estoesta says he had no exact data on how many traders do business in Urdaneta. But he says about 30 truckloads of Baguio vegetables arrive daily, while almost the same number of trucks full of other kinds of vegetables and fruits come from the other provinces.

The bagsakan market also gives jobs to porters from the city, but lately, the traders bring with them their own porters, saying this could mean some savings for them.

Peak months are from November to March, when daily cash ticket collection from the traders surges from P10,000 (during lean months) to P30,000 on exceptional days especially in December.

What makes the bagsakan market successful and why do traders want to do business here?

"We practice free enterprise," Estoesta says. "Nobody controls the price unlike in some areas where a group of people controls the price."

The peace and order situation in the city is also a factor. Plainclothes policemen continuously patrol the market.

The city's location also makes it a convenient bagsakan market. It is the gateway to Baguio City and Northern Luzon provinces, and to central and western Pangasinan.

The bagsakan market, while booming, is not the city's biggest income earner, Perez says. "But it has become a tradition that it is the trading center in the North," he says.

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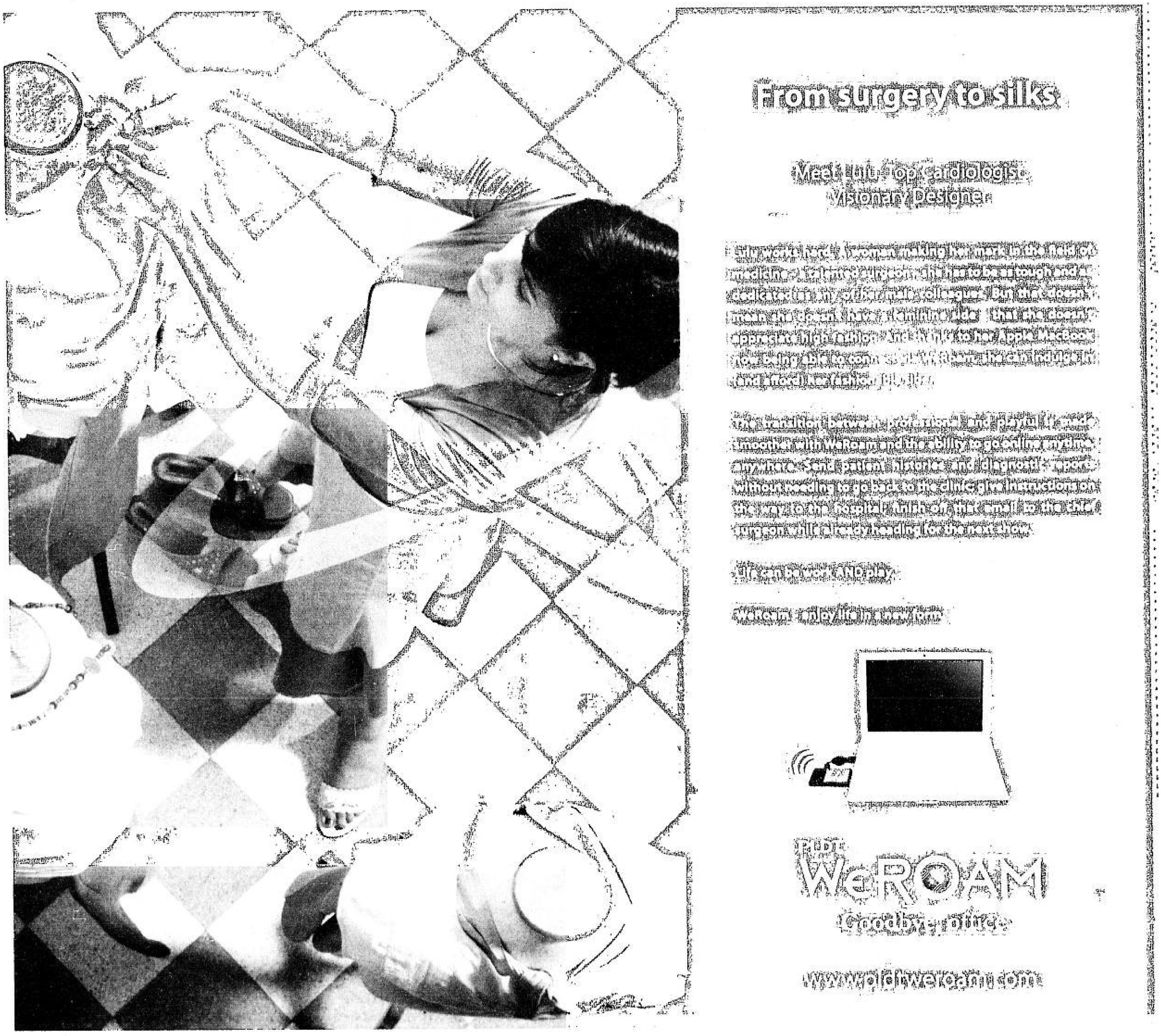

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Family members bond to fulfill a mother's dream

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KIKO'S restaurant and bar owners Kiko, Natalie and William Luena

Text and photos
by Maricar Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA—WHAT used to be a mother's dream business—Kiko's Restaurant and Bar—has now become the Luena family's source of income and reason for stronger ties.

William Luena, the eldest in the brood of four, remembers how his mother, Delia Luena, once ran a small eatery but had to close the business because of financial reasons.

His mother, however, had hopes of reviving the eatery business, adds William.

Kiko's opened on April 11, 2003 when the Luenas brood was ready to manage a bigger restaurant.

During the soft launch of Kiko's or just a day before its actual opening, the number of guests who came to dine so overwhelmed the family they decided to serve everything on the menu for free.

"She's really the brains behind all these," William says of his mom's business idea.

Barrio in the metro

In the busy town of San Pedro, the Luenas' intention was to be able to recreate the atmosphere of a farmland. They used thatched materials for the roof and the walls of the restaurant, making it look like a huge nipa hut in the middle of the street.

"I used to go to Tagaytay and I observed that many people visit the place because of the ambiance," says William, who thinks that nowadays it has become quite expensive to travel to the provinces for a vacation.

The restaurant got its name from their brother Kiko because it is easy to recall and among the siblings' names it hews closest to the Filipino motif they are trying to portray.

Main courses served at Kiko's are the native batchoy, labya (the Ilonggos' version of the bone marrow soup) and the molo.

It was the idea of Natalie, the second child of the Luenas', to serve Ilonggo dishes since their mom hails from Iloilo.

Natalie says the ingredients they use in their menu keep the distinctive flavor of Ilonggo dishes. For instance, they use a native ingredient they call patya, cook adobo without soy sauce, and serve unsweetened caldereta which is unlike the way Tagalogs cook them.

No last order

Kiko's opens at 4:30 p.m. but has no definite closing hour.

"Unlike in other restobars, our customers can stay here as long as they want," William says.

They do not ask the customers for their last order, which is normally a cue that the bar is about to close. That way, he says, "our customers will not end up looking for another place during the wee hours."

Because of this practice, William eventually permanently stayed in the restaurant. He recalls an incident when he had to pull up an improvised bed to accommodate drunken guests.

According to William, they intended to keep the price of their food low to accommodate tricycle drivers around them.

He notes that there are about five drivers' association in the place with around 200 members each. Getting at least 50 members of each association to eat regularly at Kiko's would already keep the business alive.

During the initial years of the business, Kiko's tried to adopt a fine-dining setting to lure customers. But despite the cheap price, William discovered that the eatery's patrons became intimidated.

The family then decided to transform the restaurant into a more relaxed and comfortable dining place. Much to their surprise, people of varying persuasions, ages, and even from outside the town started streaming.

"We want to keep the price affordable to all," Natalie says. William affirms this, saying, "now, anybody can just walk in here without having to think of what he should wear."

Unlike other businesses, William admits they were not as big as they are now. Kiko's started as a small eatery with only a canvas sheet (tarpaulin) to cover the area. They also had very few helpers before that the family itself had to cook and serve in the restaurant.

DINERS enjoying cheap food and ambiance at Kiko's restaurant in San Pedro, Laguna.

Branching out

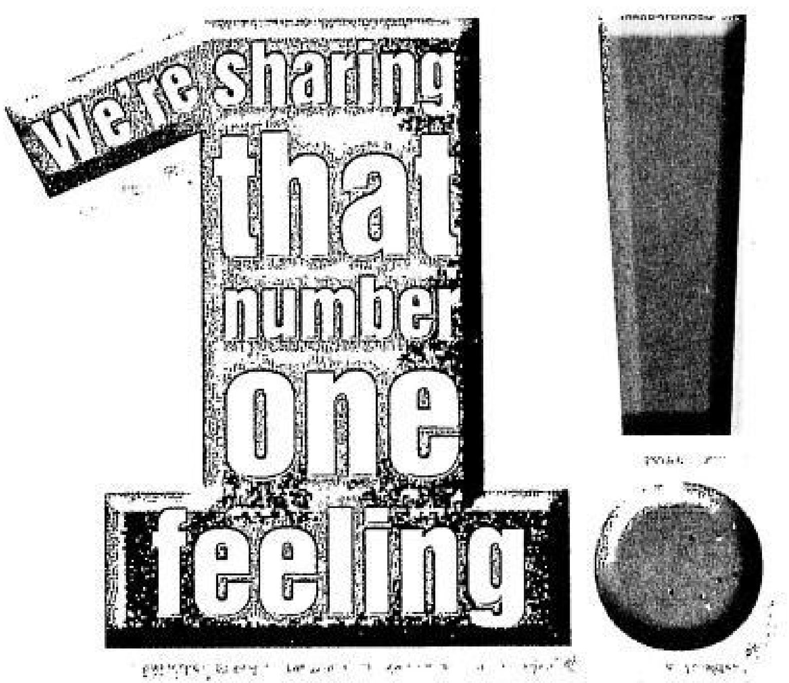
Eventually, the Luenas were able to expand the dining area. They also put up a small stage so that anybody could sing in front for free.

The decisions they make for the business come from the whole family. According to William, "If one has a plan for the business, he needs to convince everybody why he needs to do this or that."

Branching out, for instance, is one of the plans the Luenas are looking forward to. "But we do not just want anybody to handle the business," Natalie says. If that happens, they say it would most likely be managed by one of their brothers.

William believes working with his own family members could result to a 100-percent concern for the business.

"With other people, peeling an onion could be as simple as getting rid of its skin," he says. "But if you have the concern, you'll be saving almost every single ingredient that may be of use to the business."



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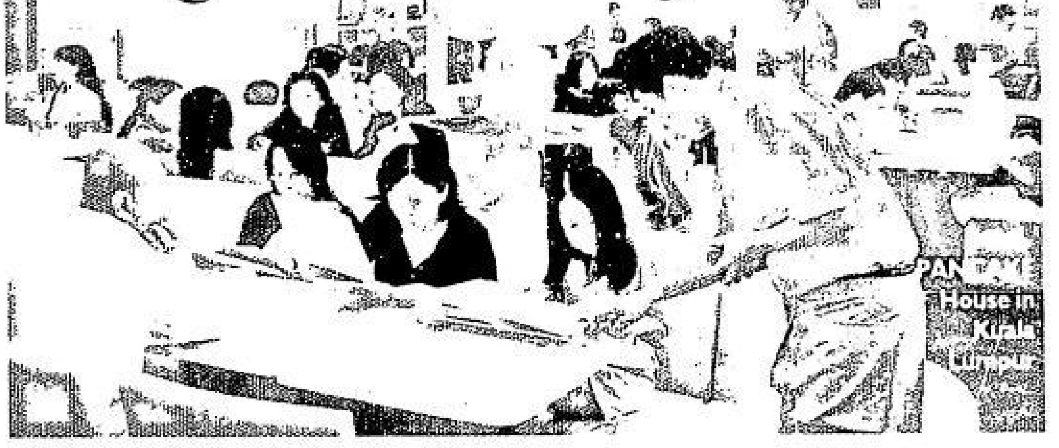
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Filipino restaurant goes to Malaysia



CARVING A REPUTATION FOR CREATING the soft and melt-in-your-mouth pancakes and classic and crunchy waffles, Pancake House has evolved from a humble home-style restaurant to a chain of more than 70 outlets in the Philippines the past 30 years.

Now, Pancake House is embarking on a new horizon that will bring its Filipino trademark to Malaysia—highlighting the brand's vision to reach out to generations of families of the global community.

"Pancake House International is a proof that a local brand can go places and impress other nationalities. This is our way of showing to the world that we can be the best in what we do," said Bernadette Lee, Pancake House managing director.

The selection of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, as the pioneer location is a challenge for Pancake House International since the country has a multicultural environment. However, Lee believes that what the restaurant will serve will be welcomed by Malaysian families.

"We are introducing some of the best comfort food that have become favorites of Filipino families. Surely, comfort food delivers satisfaction not only to the palate and stomach but also soothes the soul. It cuts across the barriers of age, nationality, even social status, yet it clearly caters to the most important unit of a community—which is the family," said Lee.

Located in Sunway Pyramid, a busy shopping mall in downtown Kuala Lumpur, Pancake House International is a refreshing welcome to both locals and foreigners alike who crave for comfort food such as pancakes and waffles; pasta and noodles; steaks, burgers and chicken; salads and sandwiches; and luscious desserts.

Since Pancake House is a restaurant that's always evolving and keeps in mind what is best for its customers, the Malaysia outlet offers Salmon Fillet, a healthy steamed fillet of salmon served with cream pepper sauce. It is not only delighting to the palate, but also healthy for the heart.

"We also have introduced new drinks and fruit shakes to cater to their refreshment needs. New chilled juices include katsuri, kiwi, black currant, and apple; while the fruit shakes are honey dew and starfruit," said Lee.

But overall, the menu offerings of Pancake House International will also be the same with Pancake House in the Philippines, albeit some minor alterations to conform to their taste.

"We are also proud of showcasing Filipino creativity to Malaysia since we have developed a stylish menu book and even made a separate menu just for kids," said Lee. She stressed, however, that the interior of Pancake House International still retained the ambience of warmth and spaciousness that the restaurant is known for.

Since its soft launch last Dec. 5, Pancake House International has been attracting a sizable number of diners seeking the welcoming sanctuary of comfort food. To be formally opened in the early months of 2008, the Malaysia outlet is just the first step for Pancake House to reach out to the world.

"As what we say here, we will win the hearts of the world 'one pancake at a time.' We envision the brand to become the restaurant of choice of families and those that are dear to one's family such as friends, schoolmates, coworkers, etc. We know this is possible because we continually strive to improve our products and evolve to become a global brand," Lee concluded.

Plans are underway for the opening of more Pancake House International branches in Malaysia.

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Sun Cellular will bring bands and celebrities to rock with its subscribers. The concerts will be held on Dec. 21 in Cebu City, Dec. 22 in Davao City, Dec. 28 in Malolos, Bulacan and Dec. 29 in Cavite.

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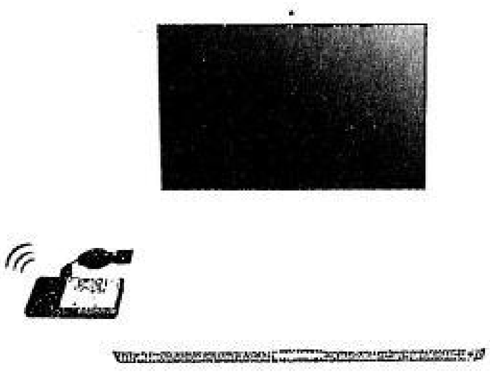

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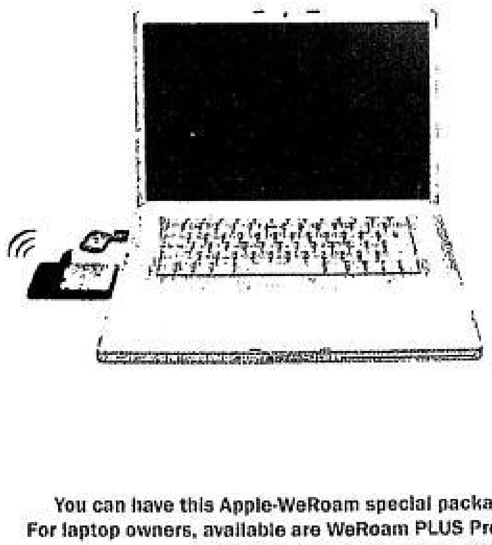

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BUSINESS *Friday*

Bringing back the economic glory of *Iloilo*

Iloilo ranks 11th in per capita deposits—each Ilonggo has P18,300 lying idle in banks

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—ILOILO BUSINESSMEN want the province to maximize its potential as a destination for tourists and investments.

During the Iloilo Investment Forum held here recently, tycoon Oscar Lopez, chairman of the Lopez Group of Companies, cited Iloilo's rich heritage and the leading role it once played with regards to culture and the economy.

"Iloilo City can become the Queen City of the South once again, able to compete against all comers for economic primacy. I believe that, for the city and the province of Iloilo, the best is yet to be," said Lopez.

He recalled that his father Eugenio launched the first Asian airline, the Iloilo Negros Air Express Co. (Inaec), in 1933. This was even before the birth of the country's flag carrier Philippine Airlines and that of its neighbors, Japan Airlines and Singapore Airlines.

"Since (the) 1850s, Iloilo has been a national leader in nationalism, economics, politics, music, culture, education and food," said Lopez in his speech.

Back then, the province's agriculture products such as rice, sugar, cotton, tobacco and indigo were among the most highly developed and were exported to neighboring islands and Manila.

But Lopez said the pride of the province at that time was in its native textile industry, producing 50,000 to 60,000 looms of the finest piña, sinamay (abaca fiber) and abaca cloth.

In 1861, the value of total exports of native textile products estimated at $1 million, said Lopez.

The boom in the sugar industry in the latter half of the 19th century catapulted Iloilo to the top, next only to Manila because its deep protected harbor became a transshipment port of sugar from the neighboring Negros Island for export to the world market.

Lopez said that in the last decade of 19th century, Iloilo ranked second only to Manila in volume of export and import trade.

But the decline of the sugar industry also triggered Iloilo's economic slowdown.

Many Ilonggo businessmen, including the Lopezes, relocated to Manila where they built newer and bigger empires.

Promotion

However, Manila-based Ilonggo businessmen, experts and economists recently banded together to help boost business in their home province.

In February, the Iloilo Economic Development Foundation (ILEDF) was formally launched to promote investments and tourism in the province.

Headed by Rex Drilon II, chief operating officer of Ortigas & Co., the ILEDF is composed of top government officials, including Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Sr. and Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas, business leaders and civil society personalities in the community.

Drilon said the strategic issues that have blocked Iloilo's moving forward and progressing are being addressed. These are power, flooding, infrastructure, accessibility and the disunity among the political leadership.

"We realize Iloilo has a lot of catching up to do just to keep apace with the new queen cities of the south such as Cebu, Davao, Cagayan de Oro and, yes, even Bacolod. The good news is things are starting to move," said Lopez.

He cited the plan to construct two 100-megawatt coal-fired power plants by DMCI in Concepcion town in Iloilo and by the Global Power Business Corp. (GPBC) in La Paz District in Iloilo City.

These, he said, would ensure stable power supply for the expected growth of the province and Panay Island.

The P8-billion Iloilo Flood Control Project is nearing completion and will address the flooding in major areas of Iloilo.

Lopez also mentioned the opening of the new P8.76-billion airport, which he said is "one of the most impressive in the country."

Lopez has taken the lead by announcing that his family will invest in a shipbuilding venture to be based in Iloilo. The Lopezes are also planning to acquire a major stake in the Palinpinon geothermal plant in Valencia town in Negros Oriental.

He also noted that the presence in Iloilo of retail giants SM, Robinsons and Gaisano as well as at least five call centers showed investor confidence and optimism.

OSCAR M. LOPEZ AUGUST DELA CRUZ

The business prospects in the province also got a recent boost with the acquisition of the site of the old Iloilo airport by Megaworld Corp. for P1.2 billion.

Megaworld has announced that it would build a business park at the 54-hectare property in Mandurriao District and will pour in an initial investment of P1.5 billion.

The business park development will include residential units, a hotel and convention center, commercial and retail stores, recreation centers and skills development facilities.

Lopez said the Megaworld property would require P300 billion in investments in the next 20 years to be fully developed.

"Gradually, the city and province of Iloilo will be transformed into a new kind of economic powerhouse. We are giving the signal to potential investors that Iloilo is now ready for the world," said Lopez.

Competitive edge

Winston Conrad Padojinog, senior economist at the University of Asia and the Pacific, said Iloilo has the natural and human resources edge over other areas.

In a briefing during the forum, he cited the province's importance as a supplier of agricultural, cattle and fishery products to other islands.

Iloilo is second in goat inventory and mango, fourth in palay and duck production, fifth in chicken, hogs, and carabao inventory and sixth in fish production.

Among the province's biggest advantage is the presence of 54 institutions of higher learning ensuring a highly educated manpower pool.

The schools in the province have around 85,000 students and produce from 17,000 to 18,000 college graduates annually.

Padojinog said this would be crucial in the expected rapid growth of business process outsourcing (BPO) investments in the region.

The number of employed in BPOs is expected to shoot up from 235,575 in 2006 to 920,674 in 2010.

BPO-related revenues are also expected to significantly increase from $3,577 million in 2006 to $12,200 million in 2010.

Padojinog also cited the availability of ready capital among the Ilonggos.

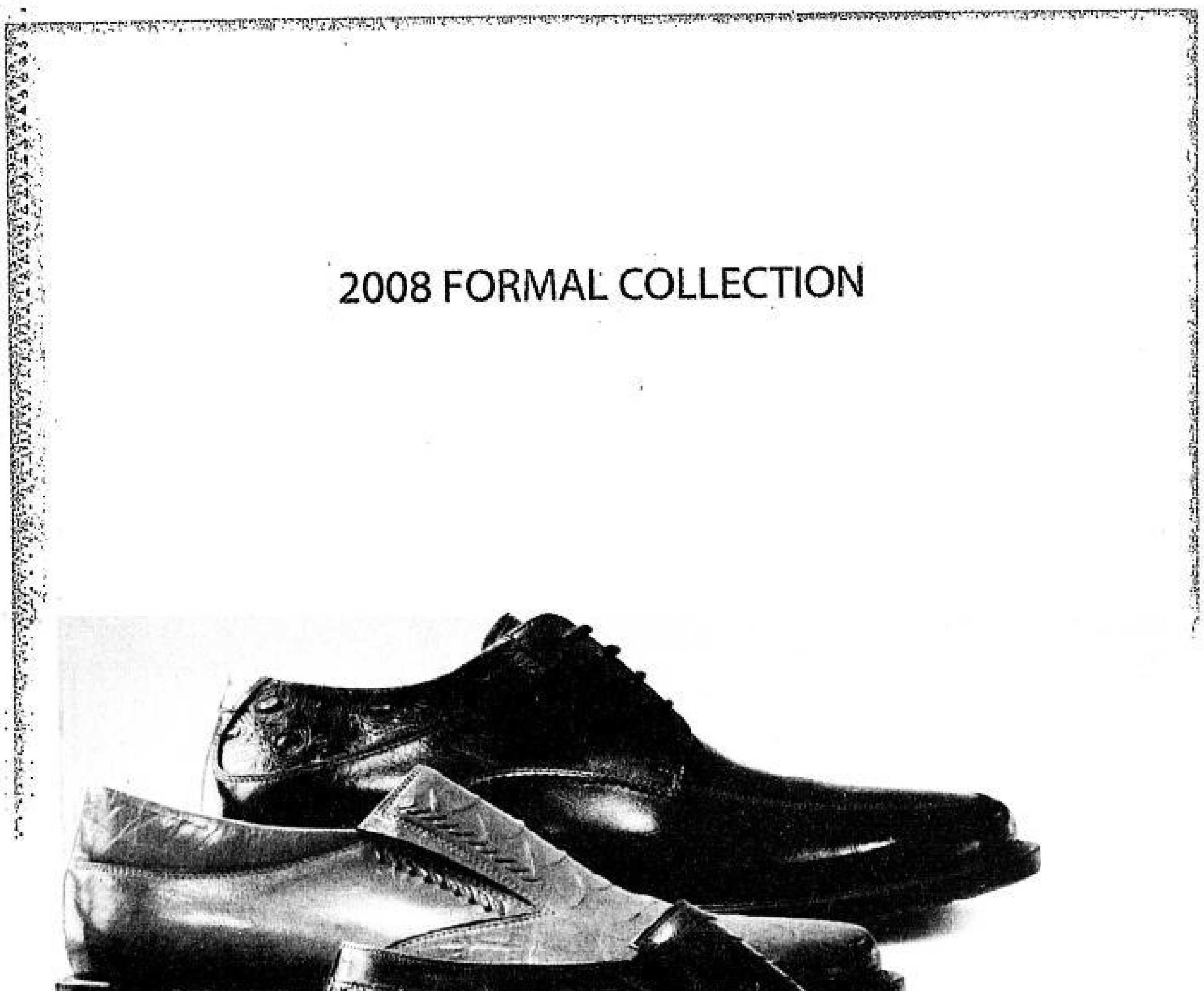
The city has the most number of banks outside Manila with 100 branches of 37 universal banks, which handle close to P40 billion in deposits.

"On a per capita deposit basis, each Ilonggo has P18,300 in cash lying idle in banks. Iloilo ranks 11th in terms of per capita deposits," said Padojinog.

He said these resources are suited for industries and service-oriented investments including shipbuilding, repair and wrecking.

Investments in beauty, health and wellness tourism as well as in education, placement, hospitals, malls and outpatient diagnostic facilities in Iloilo also has good potential.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas said the local government has focused on ensuring a business-friendly environment. Treñas said the city was considered as one of the eight most business friendly city in the country last year. He also cited the strong public and private partnership in Iloilo.



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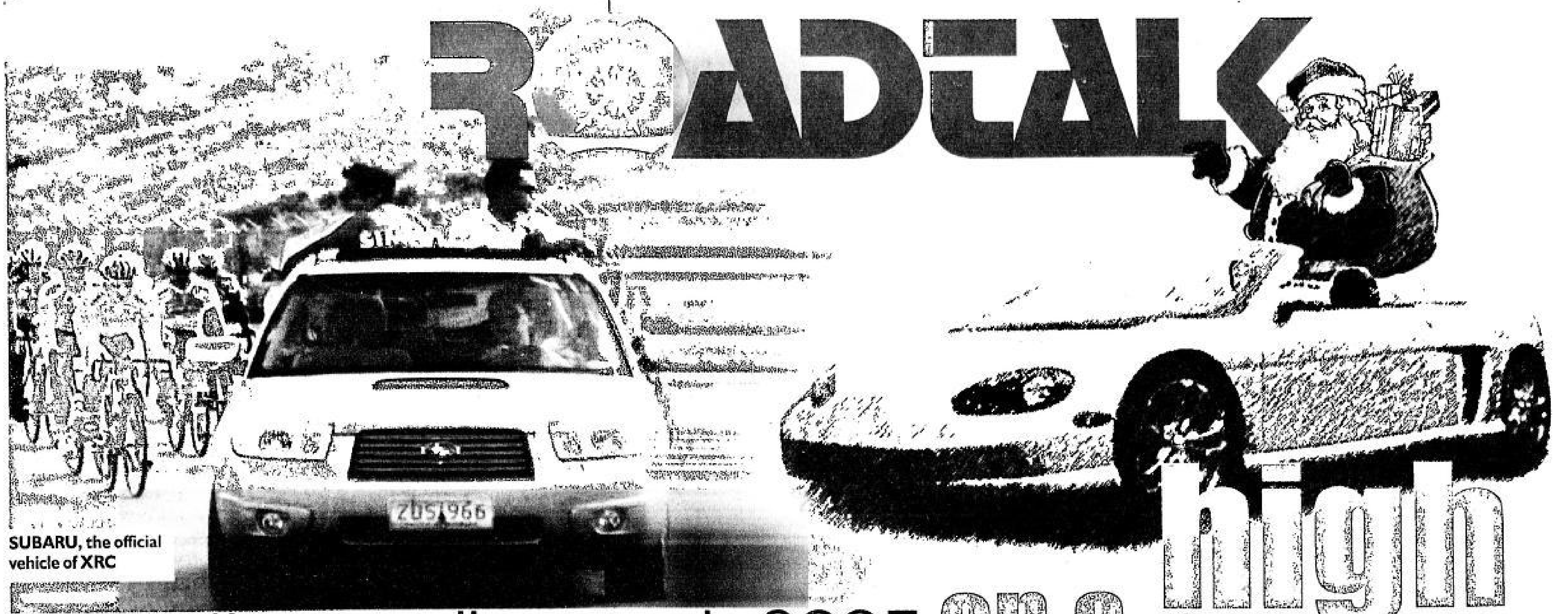

SUBARU, the official vehicle of XRC

Executive cycling ends 2007 on a high note

THE YEAR 2007 PROVED TO BE A landmark year for executive cyclists as it marked the arrival of a new multi-event series, the Executive Road Cycling Race Series, or XRC as it has come to be called.

Debuting on the smooth, rolling roads of the Subic Bay Freeport Zone in February, the XRC series attracted a bumper field of 150 competitors, representing some 16 teams from the already active executive cycling scene in the National Capital Region (NCR) and nearby communities. The course brought back both fond and painful memories for many riders since one of the pioneering races of executive cycling's early days took place on the same roads. Subic's network of asphalt ribbons is well known for long scenic stretches under the shade of old-growth forest, and also its long climbs, fast descents and seaside headwinds.

But the XRC's first leg sprung a surprise, too. Executive riders got a taste of racing their bikes on the twisty Subic International Raceway, a first for Philippine cycling and for the race track too, which is better known for hosting the country's major auto racing competitions.

Then in May, the XRC made a 2-day stop along the familiar cycling roads along the northern shore of Laguna Lake around Pililia and Bugarin where the climbing specialists were the favorites.

September found another record-breaking field of riders lining up to start the XRC's 3rd leg in the Clark Freeport in Pampanga. The combination of mostly flat terrain and monsoon rains proved to be another new challenge for most of the teams as the fast race pace proved tricky on the slick roads. A number of riders commented that the Clark road race was probably the closest thing to racing in Europe.

But even that first day was not enough to prepare them for the team time trial held on Macapagal Avenue the next day on the flat, windswept seaside course. The time trial quickly turned into a lottery as teams were faced with alternating periods of sunshine and typhoon-like driving rain and gusting crosswinds, and the fastest times were ultimately set by the lucky few who ran during the dry spells. But still the weather failed to dampen the competitors' spirits.

On the weekend of Dec. 1 and 2, nearly 200 executive cyclists trooped to the Subic Bay Freeport Zone to take part in the final leg of the Executive Road Cycling race series (XRC '07). Cars, vans and SUVs laden with lightweight competition bikes were a common sight along the highways between Metro Manila and Zambales.

Subic Bay was a fitting venue to decide the overall winners in the closely fought categories for both men and women of varying skill levels. The cool December breezes were punctuated by the starting gun fired by SBMA Deputy Administrator Raul Marcelo as the peloton took off on the first lap of the 35-km loop of the road race.

The category A & B riders would complete 105 km, while the category C riders tackled 70 km. The next day, the Subic International Raceway once again played host to the high-speed, tactically challenging criterium races.

From inception, the XRC series was intended to raise the bar for executive cycling in terms of competitiveness, organization and visibility. Elite Multi-Sport Resources (EMR), organizers of XRC, introduced some new features to the already established executive cycling scene that proved both effective and popular. Category A leader Eric Carandang of Team Fitness First commented, "The XRC Series really raised the level of executive cycling in the Philippines because aside from running bigger and better organized races, it also brought glamour to the sport by including other value-adding activities such as the fellowship night that promoted camaraderie among cyclists off the bike."

The XRC series' higher profile and multi-leg format attracted participants from novice bikers to veteran triathletes, making the 4-part series a "must-enter" event for competitors eager to measure their performance against their peers.

> The XRC series' higher profile and multi-leg format attracted participants from novice bikers to veteran triathletes, making the 4-part series a 'must-enter' event for competitors eager to measure their performance against their peers

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KILL Switch

By Raymond Tribdino

Three Two-Wheel Wishes

I know I promised to write about rainy night riding, but I decided to forgo of that idea until next January. After all, our beloved country has yet to meet its quota of typhoons for 2007. I believe the Almighty is using the fiscal year this time rather than the calendar year for storms. By that token, we most likely will have the balance of four typhoons in the first three months of 2008.

With Christmas just four days away by the time you read this, let me make my wishes for this most merry of seasons. Three two-wheel wishes, you might like to call them, especially those who think that two is better than four.

Wish No. 1: Real helmets. This wish goes out to all importers and motorcycle shops who continue to peddle cheap plastic replicas of this most essential head gear. This wish also goes to those who, just to comply with the Miriam Santiago-sponsored Helmet Law, buy plastic baseball headgear and pass it off as a legit motorcycle helmet. I have also witnessed helmets face shields breaking to pieces and wounding faces sometimes so severe pieces of plastic are lodged in the eyes.

If you haven't been in a serious or nearly serious accident involving using your head like a pencil eraser on asphalt you will never realize the importance of proper head gear. Since I have scraped the pavement quite a couple of times, I have gone to respect Mr. Bell, Arai-san and Signore AGV. (I have also come to the realization that Teknik and Alpinestars spell "alive" with just different letters.)

But you will be happy to note that Pak Index ("Pak" is Thai for "sir") now carries a FMVSS NO.218 DOT rating and a JS (Japan Standard) mark. (The genuine ones, at least) Look for an authentic safety tag on your helmet before your don it on your head.

I challenge government to ensure not only compliance to the law of wearing the helmet but ensuring the helmets brought in and sold are compliant to globally accepted safety regulations.

Wish No. 2: Authentic road courtesy. This one Santa cannot pull out of his bag. Be it the car driver or the motorcycle rider, mutual respect is critical to keep sanity on the roads. Remember, motorcycle manufacturers are gunning to reach a total industry volume of 1,000,000 units by 2010.

By that time there would only have been about 140,000 brand-new cars sold. That means motorcycles will outnumber cars by the hundreds. With that many underbones, scoots and big bikes on the road, it could be mayhem.

"Could be," is the operative phrase. Anyone who has been to Vietnam, Myanmar, or Cambodia and to a certain extent India, will know what this motorcycle mayhem is. In those hot and humid places, where exotic Bajaj, Lambrettas and Piaggos coexist nicely with the latest Japanese underbones and European scoots.

These throngs of two wheelers (including the human-powered kind) literally eat up cars in the intersections. I have seen a flood of motorcycles just inundate a busy intersection in Vietnam and traffic stood still for a couple of minutes.

But go to Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, where a hefty motorcycle population also exists, things are a bit more civilized. Why? Simply because their governments, in a frantic chase to make the most out of a burgeoning economy, chose to train people on the symbiosis of 4-wheeled vehicles and motorcycles. They managed motorcycle usage and put strict but reasonable laws on helmets, riding safety and rider training.

It worked for them because motorcycles symbolized a working classman freedom, a sort of segue to a car. That is why now these countries are in a mad rush to develop the "3000-dollar car," which is seen as the "natural evolution from a motorcycle." In fact Suzuki and Nissan are scrambling to be the first to make such a car in India, while Thailand is vigorously pursuing its "Eco-car" project.

Remember road courtesy does not mean bowing to each and every motorist one sees. It is reflected in the way we respect the place other motorists have on the road.

Wish No. 3: Manufacturer-sponsored rider training. It will cost money, money that most motorcycle manufacturers would rather divert to a little box called "profit." One reason why we have so many unruly motorcyclists is that many newbie riders graduated from a bike and have no sense of road rules and courtesy. To them every available open space is an opportunity to get to point B.

I sincerely think that motorcycle manufacturers should, at this point in time, support some kind of rider training before they turn over the keys. Honda Motor Philippines is doing a great job setting up that driving and riding school in Sta. Rosa. But they should take it one step higher and offer subsidized (but required) rider training.

You are reading from a graduate of the Honda Riding Academy in Sucat. Don't ask me when but suffice to say we were training on XL125s then. Not only did the Riding Academy teach me the skills necessary to ride, but also the mindset needed to ride well. Kudos to Honda for this effort!

My last wish is a truly personal one. I wish that one day in 2008, wife Ludi will join me in the joys and freedoms of motorcycling as she is my most sought after backride. In our 16 years of marriage, she has only ridden with me twice, once on her dad's Honda CB to buy pizza at the old Shakey's in San Pablo. The next time would be five years later on my wonderful Yamaha V to Los Banos to look for a swimming place. Just two times. In between six children and 16 years, two times (total seat time: 3 hours) is a little too little, don't you think?

Merry motorcycling and pretty backrides to all!

Next month (really): Rain Weather Riding at Night. Please send your comments to: killswitch.roadtalk@gmail.com.

Suzuki Grand Vitara wins compact SUV of the year

IT'S ANOTHER GREAT ACHIEVEment for Suzuki Grand Vitara 2.7L V6 on being recognized as the Compact Sport Utility Vehicle of the Year by the Car Awards Group Inc (Cagi) at the Petron 2007 Car Of The Year (Coty) Philippines Awards last November. Cagi is an independent, non-profit, non-stock organization of 30 motoring journalists representing various media outfits.

Choosing the winners were based on the results of intensive quality tests that were conducted from September to October by a control group of professional rally drivers and Cagi members using the latest test instruments at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite.

It's no secret that the Grand Vitara's strength comes from the genius design, advanced safety features and technology from Japan. High intensity discharge (HID) projector head lamps, headlight washers, power tilt and slide glass sunroof and 17" alloy wheels mounted on 225/65R17 tires complete its sturdy exterior. From the inside, passengers enjoy luxury in leather steering wheel and leather seats. Grand Vitara extends the comfort zone with its keyless start system, AM/FM and 6-CD changer, MP3 audio system with a total of seven speakers including subwoofer, audio controls mounted on the steering wheel and cruise control buttons for a relaxing long drive.

The Grand Vitara's edge as a sport utility vehicle is evident on performance and handling. Drivers can cruise effortlessly on steep terrains and rough roads with its 2.7L V6 engine. Its 5-speed automatic transmission is specially tuned hydraulic engine mounts to help reduce vibration and noise. When driving uphill, a gradient-sensing control system helps minimize gear hunting. The same system synchronizes with the brakes to optimize gear changes when driving downhill. Safety is assured with side-curtain, front-side, dual driver and 6 passenger airbags combined with an Electronic Stability Control switch (ESP). The Grand Vitara's advantage makes the most ambitious road trips convenient and secure.

This year's compact sports utility vehicle once again lives up beyond expectations on delivering technology, luxury and comfort at its best.

The Honda CR-V: Best in 2WD Crossover and Wagon

THE CAR AWARDS GROUP INC (CAGI) DECLARED the CR-V 2.0 MT as the best in the 2WD Crossover category during the Car of the Year Awards Night held at the Rockwell Tent. Cagi is composed of motoring journalists from the print, broadcast and new media who annually conduct qualitative and quantitative tests on participating vehicles. The CR-V stood out among five other nominees in its class.

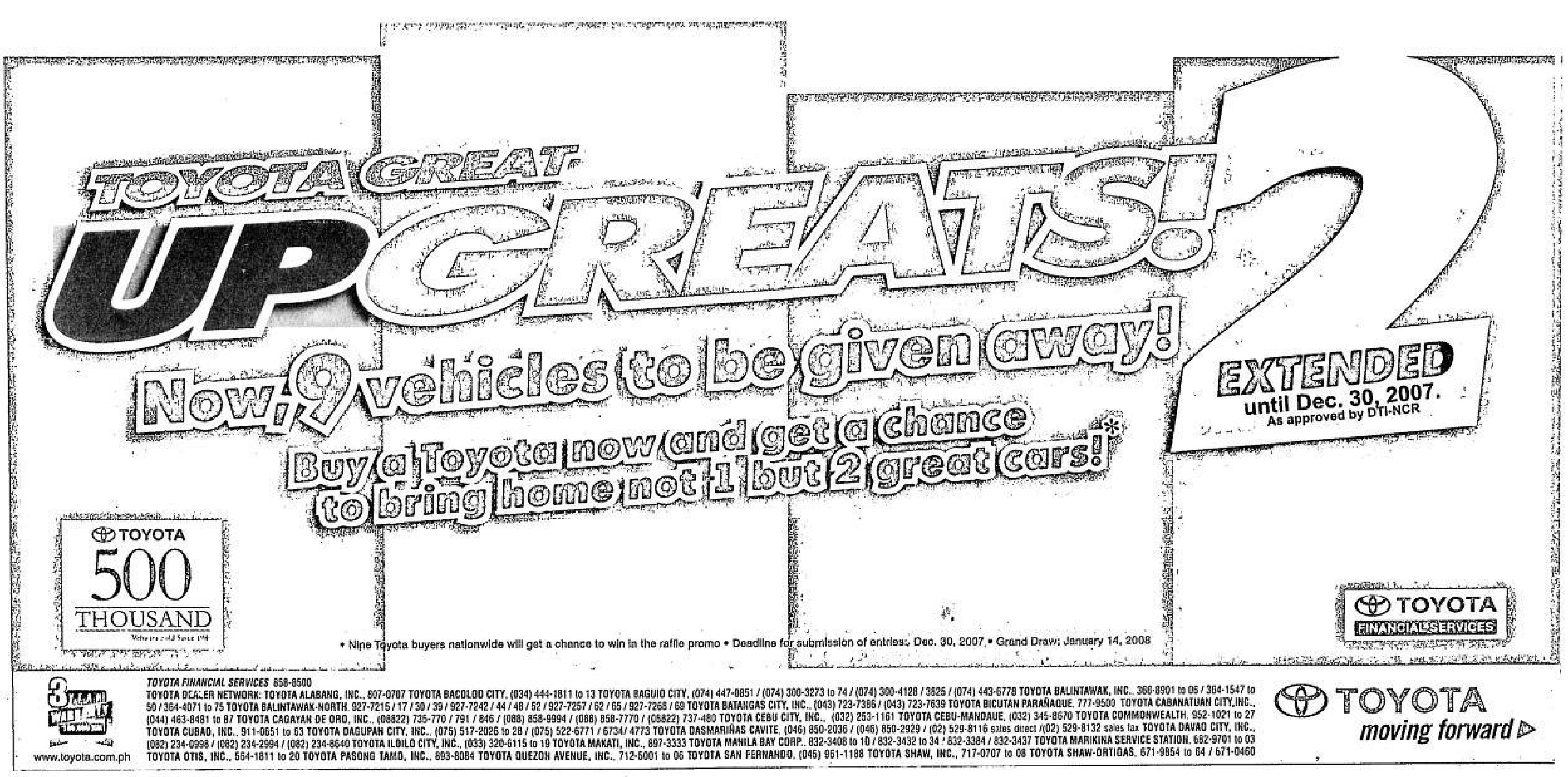
"We, at Honda, are grateful for this recognition," Hiroshi Shimizu, president of Honda Cars Philippines Inc said. "The 2007 CR-V shows that Honda's commitment to provide its customers with world-class products goes beyond redesigning and making a breakthrough vehicle. We continually strive to ensure every customer's safety, comfort and riding enjoyment."

The Honda CR-V boasts of sedan-like ride and comfort, sophisticated overall design and unmatched engine performance and distinguishes itself from other SUVs in terms of sophistication and premium quality. Under its hood lies the new 2.0-liter SOHC i-VTEC engine, which produces 150 ps at 6200 rpm of power, with enhanced power and torque for effortless handling, clean emissions and promising fuel economy.

The CR-V also leads in providing security and safety, earning international honors for its advanced safety features. It has a spacious cabin filled with thoughtfully designed amenities for all occupants and comes with the Anti-Lock Brake System, the Electronic Brake Force-Distribution and the Engine Immobilizer for added security. The CR-V has received a 5-star rating from the US National Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) and has been recognized as a 2007 Top Safety Pick by the US Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). These awards were based on several extensive tests, such as frontal- and side-impact crash tests.

The new CR-V has consistently topped the sales chart since its launch in March 2007, with sales now reaching 2,914 units. "As regular shipment of fresh CBU units from Thailand has stabilized, Honda Cars Philippines and its dealers nationwide will now be able to serve the long line of waiting customers", Shimizu added.

Experience the award-winning performance of the CR-V. Visit your nearest Honda showroom for a testdrive or log on to www.hondaphil.com for more details.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* Nine Toyota buyers nationwide will get a chance to win in the raffle promo • Deadline for submission of entries: Dec. 30, 2007 • Grand Draw: January 14, 2008

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TOYOTA moving forward

THE NISSAN FRONTIER NAVARA

All new pickup 's arrival is one giant leap for truck kind

NO LONGER A PREVIEW, THIS IS THE REal deal. Universal Motors Corp (UMC) today unleashes its newest breed of Nissan pickups—the much anticipated, All-New Nissan Frontier Navara.

Renowned for its reliability and toughness in the rough, this latest version of the vaunted Frontier embodies long haul thinking at its finest. Drawing from Nissan technological DNA, rally racing experience and truck-building expertise, the Navara is built to weather the worst torture tests, third-world abuse, and the ravages of time.

It has been reaping awards, including Australian UTE of the year, New Zealand car of the year, Germany pickup of the year, Spain pickup of the year, and Consumer Digest's Best buy in the United States.

And while reliability has always been a Frontier badge, it is innovation that sets this line of trucks apart. And it is here where the Navara shines. One-of-a-kind features are aplenty, as the new pickup extends the Frontier legacy of leadership by notching up a number of impressive firsts in its category.

The Frontier Navara is the first pickup truck to feature six-speed manual transmission. Mated to a second-gen common rail system, this unique configuration promises smooth shifting, quick acceleration as well as improved fuel efficiency. A 5-speed Automatic Transmission version is also available. The Navara also features such conveniences as an electronic-controlled 4WD system with "Shift-on-the-Fly" function. It enables one to shift between 2WD and 4WD with the use of a dial even without stopping.

Its YD25DDTi turbo intercooler diesel engine itself is a record holder, the most powerful in its class, delivering horse power at 174 Ps and a maximum torque of 403 Nm. All while providing better fuel efficiency and reduced emission.

The Navara also has the longest wheelbase in its class.

The Nissan Frontier Navara is exclusively distributed by UMC and is available in 4x4 and 4x2 variants, with 6-speed manual transmission or 5-speed automatic transmission.

High note . . .

From page B4-1

Cycling has a rich history in the Philippines dating back to the 1950s, with a number of past riders becoming household names. But since pro and national riders are barred from entering, executive cycling opens the door to enthusiasts who used to be relegated to watching races on television, but can now vie for honors in a well-organized, professionally run racing series.

At the close of the 2007 series, favorites and newcomers alike shared the limelight. New teams made waves, and the performance levels of all the categories increased dramatically. 2008 can only bring bigger and better things for executive cycling.

Presented by sport optics brand Spyder and Men's Health magazine, the Executive Road Cycling series is fueling the resurgence of cycling in the country. Other series supporters include Subaru, the official vehicle of XRC, Fitness First, MAX by Revicon, Coca-Cola, Rush, FSA, Fizik, Tie Line, SRAM, Lazer, Ed Lee Designs, Cremora and All Terra Cyclery.

Ask GIBS

Mechanic-at-large Giby Yalung answers your most pressing automotive problems

Dear Gibs,

My car is a 2002 Mercedes E240 wagon imported via the grey market. When my wife recently used the car to go up to Tagaytay, she started smelling gas fumes inside the cabin. I brought it back twice to a Benz specialist who happened to be our old family mechanic who worked in Benz in Saudi Arabia 20 years ago. He found nothing wrong with it. I didn't bring it to the official Benz dealer at CATS because I was afraid of the costs, even for a check up. My old Benz mechanic told me that the smell of the gas fumes was normal, especially when starting the car during cold mornings. I found this very unusual since I could smell the fumes every time I was stuck in traffic or idling. I'm also scared that the car might be a death trap for me and my family, especially if carbon monoxide is actually leaking into the cabin.

Ronald of Mandaluyong

Dear Ronald,

The fumes you smell at idling or in traffic conditions can be traced to the exhaust pipe at the rear of the car. Bear in mind that there is a likelihood of a rubber gasket leak in the door seal of the 5th door of your wagon. It is also a likelihood that if left unchecked, carbon monoxide and other toxic fumes would seep into the cabin. I suggest you have it fixed as soon as possible. Never take no for an answer when it comes to the health and safety of you and your loved ones. When in doubt, always complain until you become satisfied.

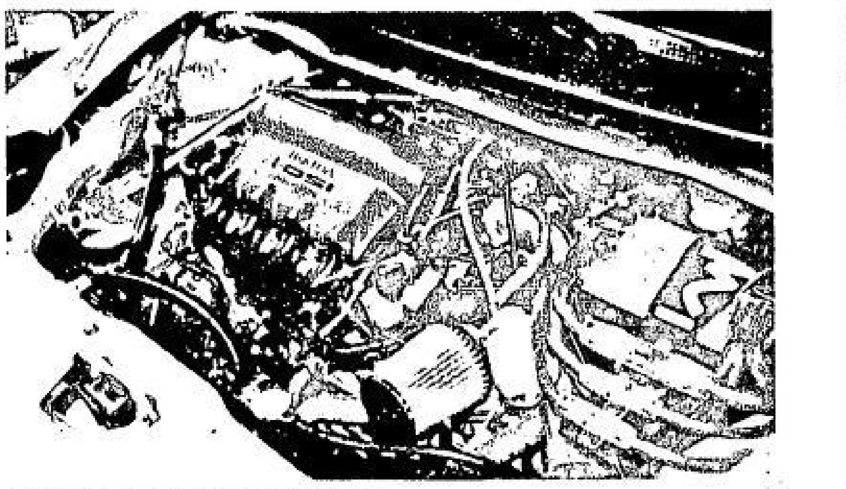
Sadly, only officially recognized certified Benz shops carry special test instruments that can easily detect traces of gas and sulfur. Unfortunately your old Benz mechanic doesn't have any of these instruments.

So, I suggest you bring it to a certified Mercedes Benz dealer and repair shop if only for the special equipment. By scrimping on fly-by-night shops, I'm afraid you'll be getting the short end of the stick, and risking the health of you and your loved ones.

In an official authorized dealer, highly trained technicians will make sure your car is safe and reliable. They also carry with them original parts, complete service manuals, and data updates on your car's condition. As the saying goes: You pay peanuts, you get monkeys. Thanks for writing.

Gibs

For more questions, e-mail askgibs.roadtalk@gmail.com



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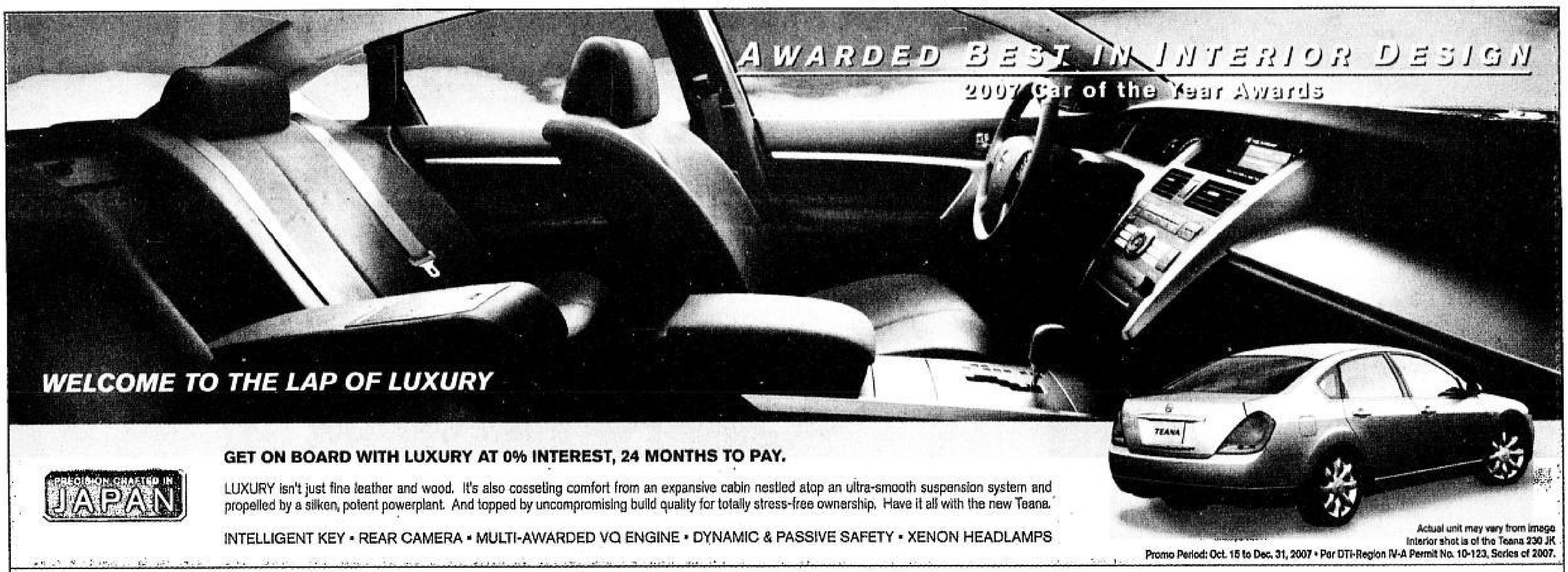
SpeedLab introduces its first complete 100-percent bolt-on kit for the Honda Jazz and City, 1.3L and 1.5L engines, automatic or manual transmission. The kit contains all necessary components and installation is carried in a week's time by Speedlab's trained technicians without modifications being done to the engine. The kit has been Dyno proven to deliver an increase in engine output by 70 to 90 percent. Speedlab's kit consists of the following: GT15 turbo, cast iron manifold and outlet, stainless steel pipings, silicon couplers, K&N filter, Unichip piggyback computer, 440cc injector, front mount intercooler, blow off valve, installation and dyno tuning. The SpeedLab turbo kit functions very well with the vehicle's stock exhaust system. For more info, call 376-4648/51 or log on to www.speedlab.com.ph.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2007 Car of the Year Awards
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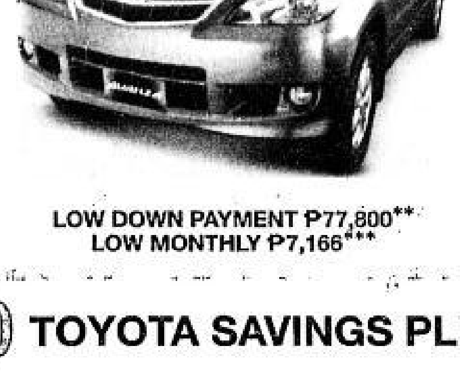

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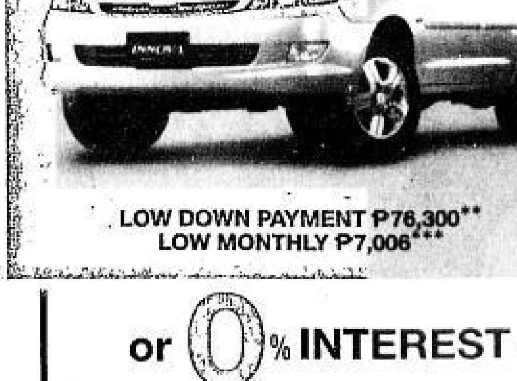

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*** 50 % DP, 72 months on Yaris 1.5 M/T, Altis 1.6 J M/T, Avanza 1.5 G M/T, Innova 2.0 J M/T
**** 50% DP, 60 months, Fortuner 4x2 G 2.7 Gas A/T

See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5640 Series of 2007.

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- Keyless Entry & Alarm
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- E-VGT S-CRDi V6 Engine
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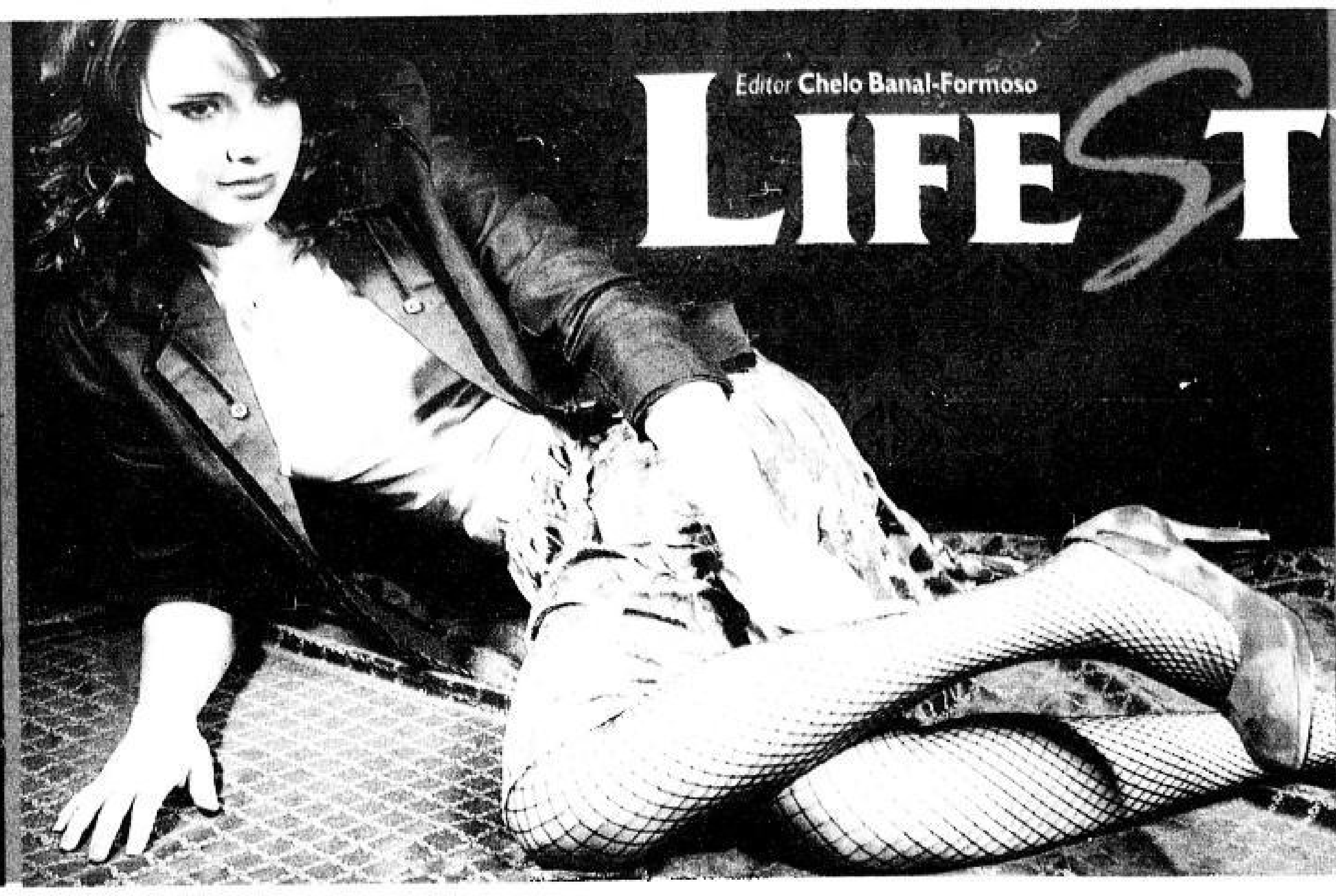

WHITE blouse, P2,690, green jacket with velvet piping, P5,899, floral pleated skirt, P3,717, All from Fly Now; purple platforms, Possibility, P2,399

From corporate wear to cocktail chic

Go from the office straight to any party with nary a fuss with our practical little tips and tricks

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

IT'S THAT TIME OF year when calendars are chock-full of socials like office Christmas parties, family reunions and get-togethers. If you're a working woman who spends most of your day at work, you're probably too busy and probably quite weary of trying to come up with stylish ensembles to wear to all these festivities.

Well, we aim to make your lives a little easier this season, so together with the help of stylist Donna Cuna-Pita, we've come up with a few helpful hints on how you can amp up your work wear with an effortless but stylish tweak.

Go from the office straight to any party with nary a fuss with our practical little tips and tricks:

Throw in an element of surprise

Do away with boring basics and add an unexpected element in your outfit that will make you stand out. A bold pair of purple shoes or a wide belt, for example, will set you apart from the office crowd without looking like you're trying too hard

Play with different textures

A mix of different textures can luxe up any ordinary ensemble. A silk blouse can dress up office-worth tweed pants, as well as add tactile and visual interest

FROM/ C2

The new Nokia N95 8GB.
The All-in-One device
taken to the next level.

Maps
Options
N95 8GB
NOKIA

The new Nokia N95 8GB boasts of a bigger 8GB internal memory, a wider 2.8" QVGA screen, a 5 megapixel camera with Carl Zeiss optics, DVD-grade videos, the Nokia Video Center and more. The All-in-One device just got all beefed up.

3G MOBILE BROADBAND HSDPA WiFi™ Carl Zeiss Optics

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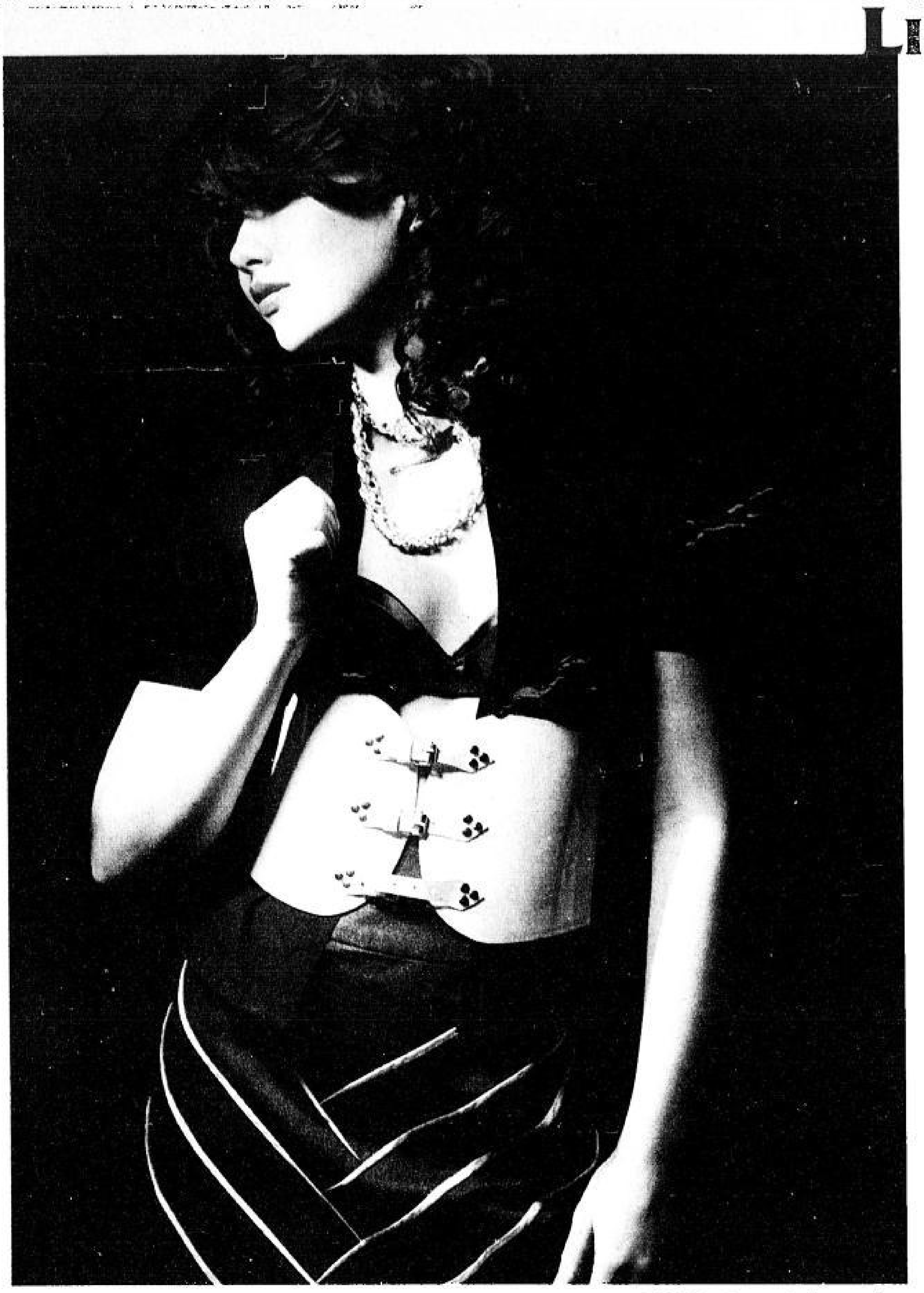

BLACK satin tuxedo five-way bra, Warner's, P1,975; black pleated collar top, P2,329, gray skirt with white stripes, P2,649, both from Abyzz; wide white belt, Wildflower, P250

FIVE-WAY beige bra, Warner's, P1,750; white blouse, P2,649, gray blouse with floral embroidery worn on top, P2,329, mustard skirt, P2,459, all from Abyzz

Photography Pat Dy
Styling Donna Cuna Pita
Makeup Barbi Chan
for Maybeline NY
Hair Bren Sales for Bedhead
Model Camille of Reco

From corporate wear to cocktail chic

From page C1

Put it in print

Pair your solid staples with feminine floral prints or wear a delicate polka-dot chiffon blouse under your stiff office jacket. This playful mix will make your look party-ready and uniquely your own

Shine on

Shine brighter than the tinsel in the tree! Replace cotton basics like a collared shirt with shimmery items such as a lurex knit top. Or go for a far-from-subtle metallic skirt in place of black trousers or pencil skirt. Too shy to go flashy? Choose metallic accessories like silver shoes or a gold bag for megawatt style

Pile it on

Chandelier earrings, an armful of bangles or a neck full of necklaces (not worn together, mind you) can easily dress up your office duds. So, whip off that stiff jacket and go for a bit of bling for a sparkly and fun holiday look

All items are exclusively available at Crossings Department stores at the G/F TriNoma, 2/L Shangri-la, 2/L The Ramp Glorietta, 2/L The Ramp Podium, and Crossings Quezon Avenue. Check out www.crossings.com.ph for more information.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

WHITE plushline bra, Warner's, P1
ribbon trim, P745, all from xsml

SILVER coat with belt, P7,980, whit
skirt, P4,109, all from Fly Now

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AYALA MALLS extends shoppi
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;295; White cropped jacket, P2,499, full skirt with

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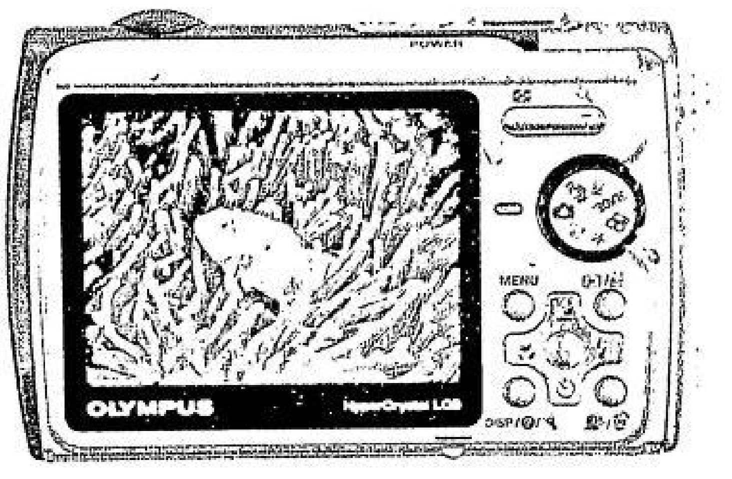

HOW DO YOU SW?

Introducing the Olympus μ 790 SW. With the ability to snap underwater shots at up to 3 metres deep without an underwater casing, operate at chilling temperatures of up to -10°C and brush aside 1.5 metre falls, the μ 790 SW opens a whole new world of possibilities.

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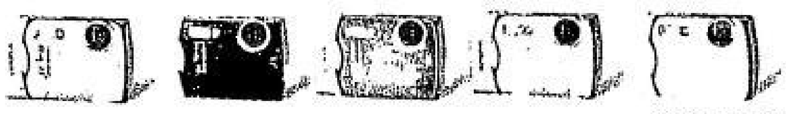

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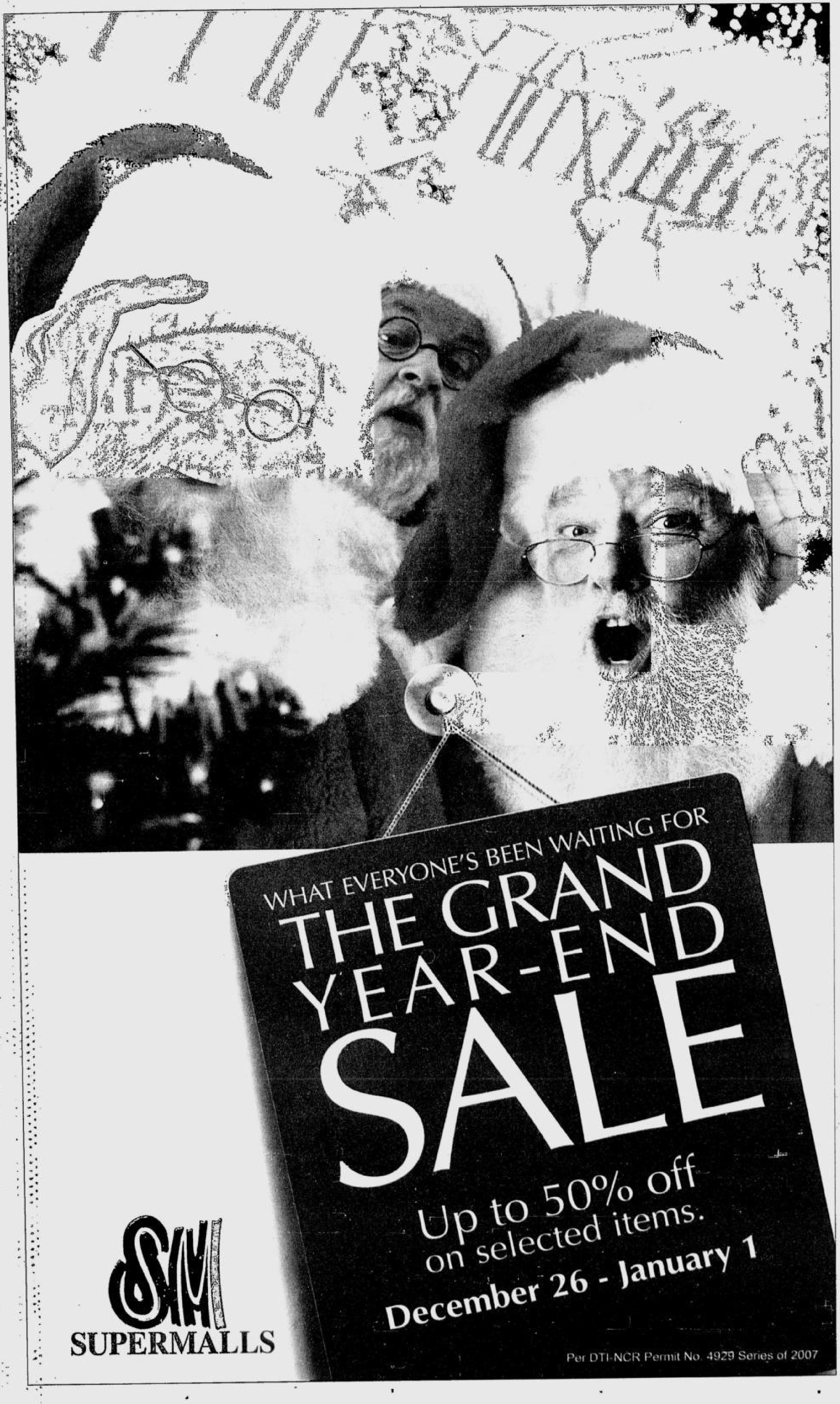
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10am – 11pm

ON DUDA: [illegible]

Bloomsday scenario

The year may be coming to a close, but it seems like everything's coming up roses in 2008

THE YEAREND FASHION FORECASTS from the powers-that-be are already predicting a bloomsday scenario for the coming Spring/Summer season. A few of those heeding nature's call: Balenciaga's floral-print mini-dresses paired with gladiator boots, and Chloe's will-o-the-wispy spring wardrobe.

Jenni Epperson

On the local front, designer Charina Sarte is also sharing this field of vision.

Her Holiday 2007 line is called Garden of Eden, her first collection since she changed the name of her swim resortwear label from Minx to Charina Sarte.

As the name of the collection implies, it's inspired by nature. Many of the pieces are made with natural fibers such as voile, linen, silk and gauze.

Expect to see a lot of animal prints and vibrant floral patterns. The pieces are very much wearable, yet still evoke an unmistakable glamour.

Says Charina: "I feel that my label is growing up, and so we are reformatting from the very sexy Minx before to a more feminine and luxurious line. I am also putting a lot more of my personality in the designs."

Charina has come a long way from her start selling pieces from her home. Today, Charina's designs are available in Mix Greenbelt, House of Laurel, Souk Gallery,

BLOOMSDAY/ D2

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Stores Specialists, Inc.

Bloomsday s

Miabella, Culte Femme at Rustan's stores and Manami Boutique. This holiday season, her collections are also available in Itsie Bitsie and Amanpulo Boutique.

She also designed the swimwear for the Hans Bruman show last November.

Her favorite piece? The gauze mumu dress embellished with rosettes.

"I also love the black Romina flora beach gown with bamboo rings and bamboo printed linen shorts which are definitely a must-have."

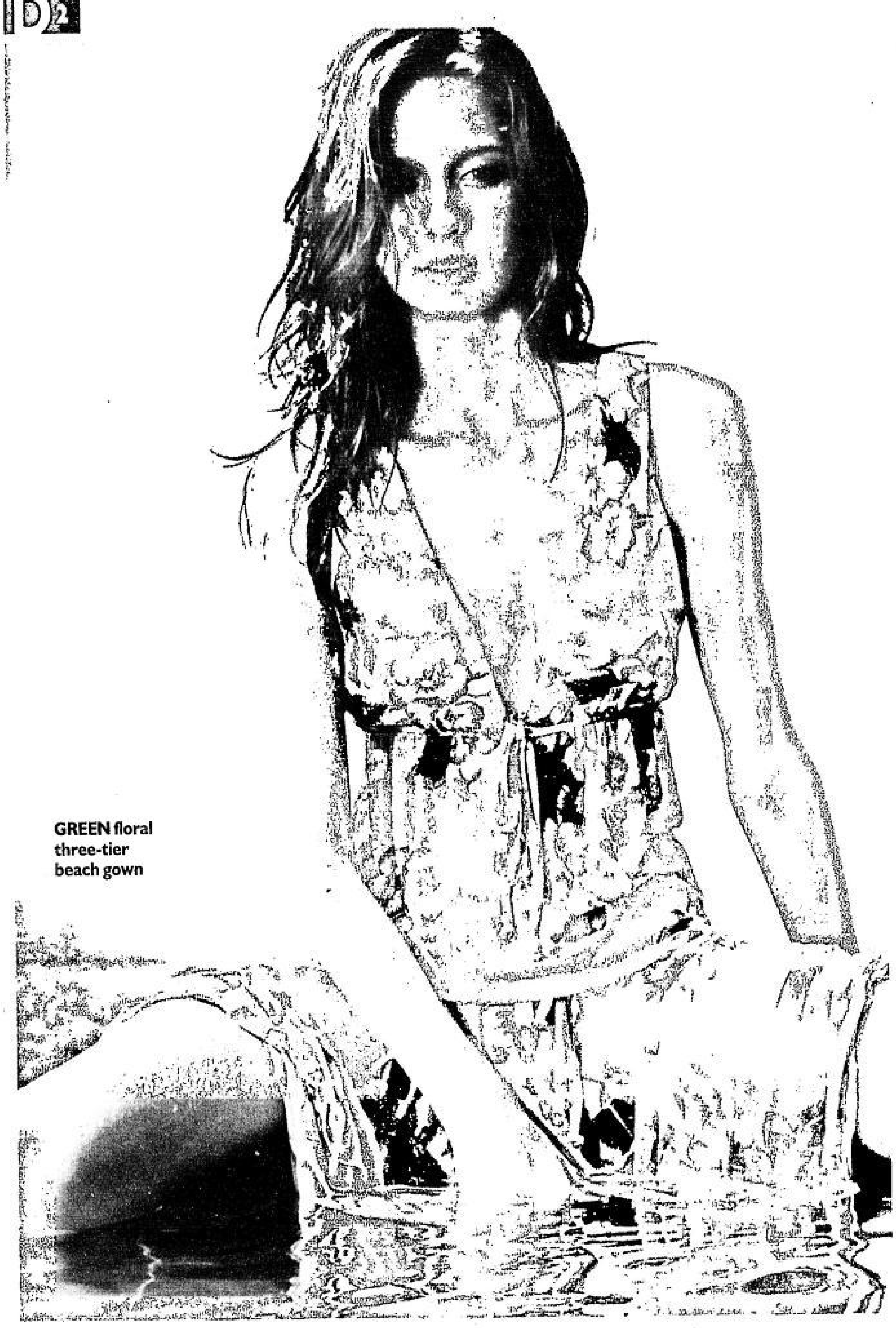
This time, she concentrated on designing two-piece bikinis, which is a departure from her share of maillots in past collections. "I really worked on the cut of the bikinis so they are very flattering and comfortable."

Other lounge-worthy standouts in the collection: a mauve printed "Darla" dress, an ivory lace dress (paired with a brown leopard bikini), and a "Natalie" kaftan in ivory.

The pieces are light and easy, like a cool breeze on a perfect afternoon. Here is resort wear that will get anyone ready for global warming.

Now that is what I call flower power.

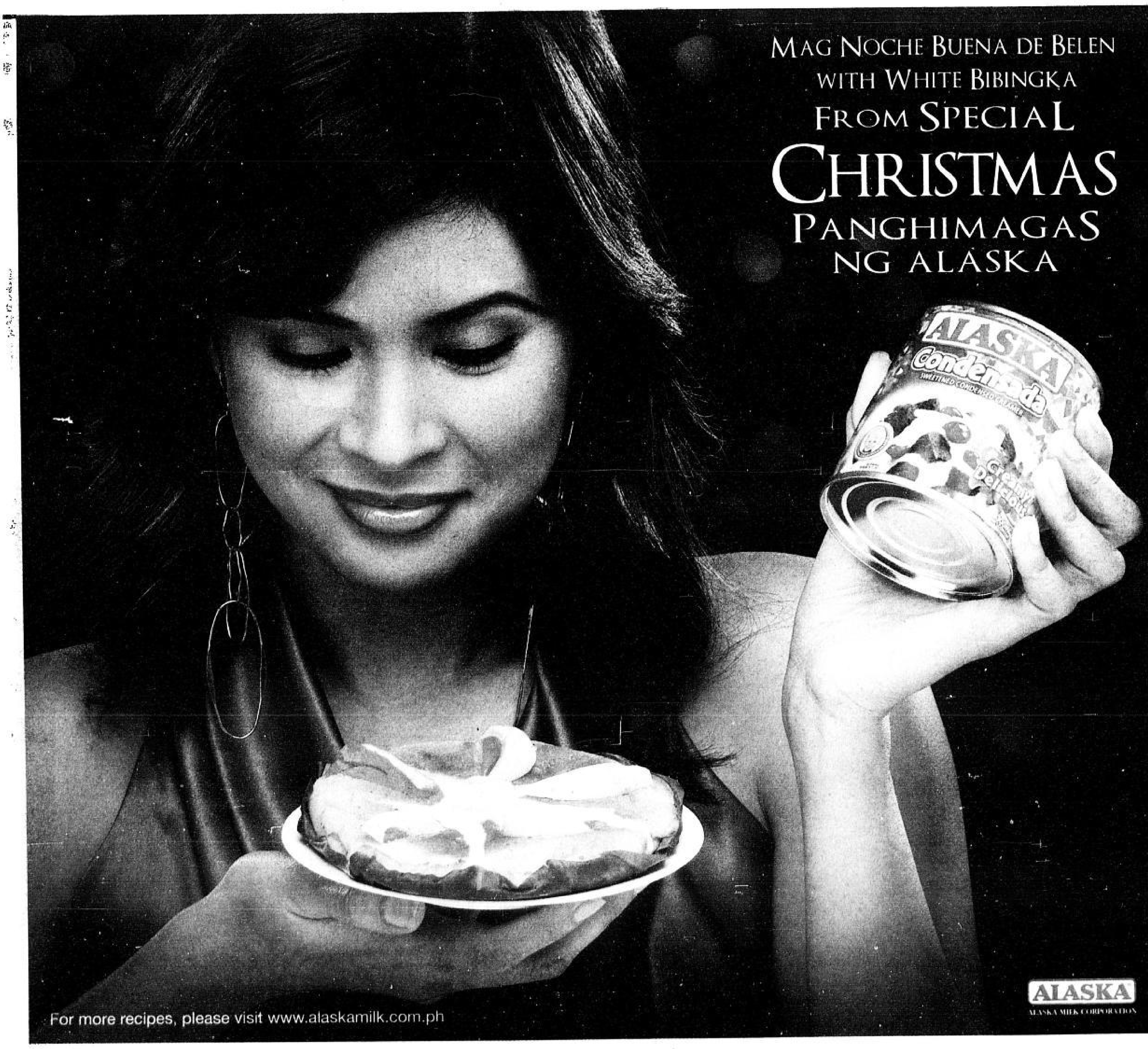
E-mail the author at jfashion@inquirer.com.ph



GREEN floral three-tier beach gown

MINT maillot with ruffles

BLUSH cutout with ribbon detail



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From page D1

Photography Steve Tirona
Styling Dobie Aranda
Models Duda Seillar and Isabel Mattoso
Hair and Makeup Claire Diokno
Shot on location Punta Fuego
Swim and Resort wear by Charina Sarte
(tel. 0917-8460007)
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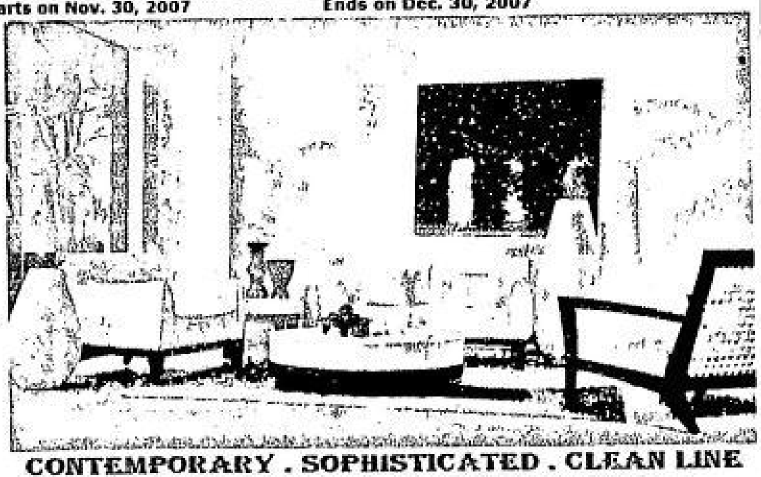

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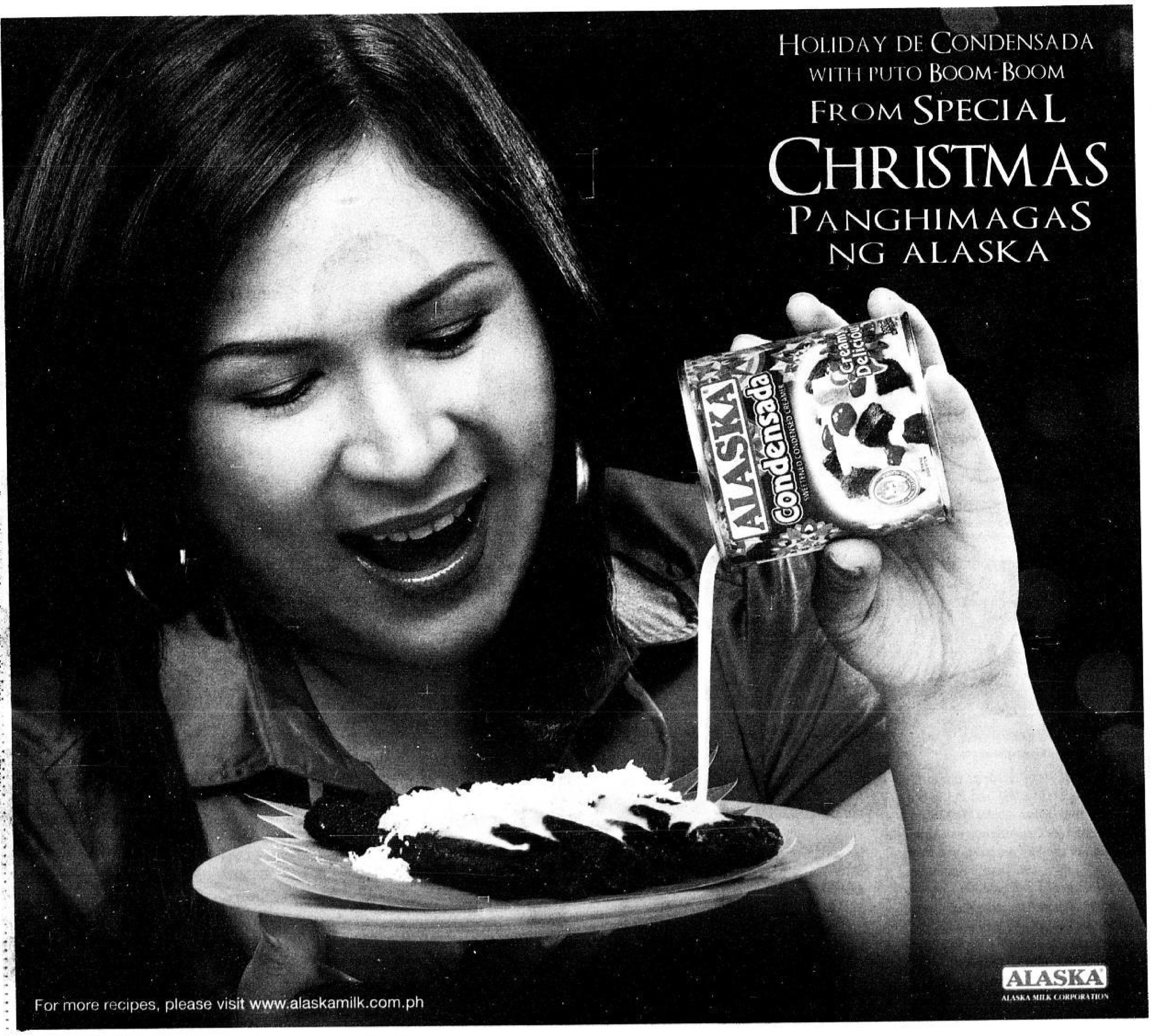

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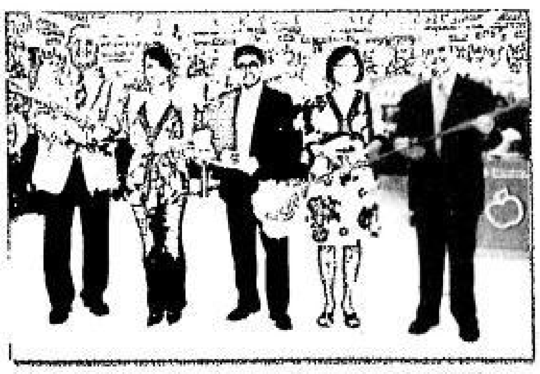
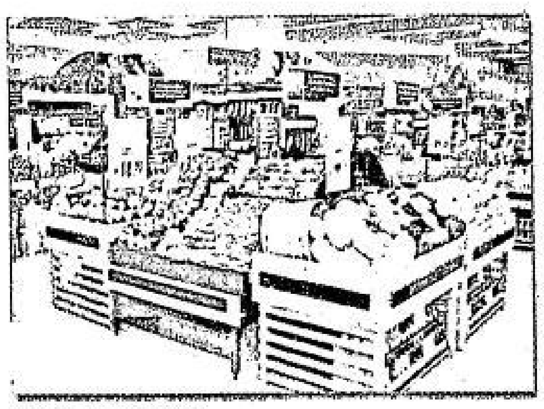
Robinsons Supermarket Otis

Opens its Lanes to Shoppers

Robinsons Supermarket opened its 32nd branch at Robinsons Place Otis in Pandacan, Manila amidst fanfare and celebration. The store was opened by Sanjiv Mehta, CEO of Unilever Philippines; David Lyons, President and CEO of Coca-Cola Bottlers Phils; Baring Olafsson, COO of Coca-Cola Bottlers Phils; Jeannie Posas, owner and general manager of Dizon Farms; Johnlu Koa, founder and CEO of French Baker and celebrity Maureen Larazabal.

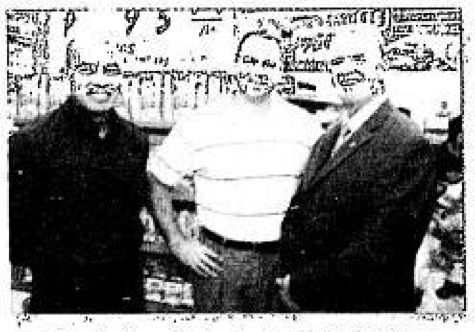

L-R: Baring Olafsson, Maureen Larazabal, Sanjiv Mehta, Jeannie Posas and David Lyons


The Produce Section

The event was attended by Robinsons Supermarket's many trade partners including Proctor and Gamble Philippines' General Manager Jim Lafferty; Nestle Philippines' National Sales Director Shahab Bachani and San Miguel Corporation Key Accounts Group's General Manager Archie Gupalor were also present.

L-R: Paolo Atienza, Pete Ramos, Sanjiv Mehta, Jay Go, and Pong Ejercito

A special part of the event was the launch of the Beauty Essentials Health and Beauty Center which houses the store's grooming and beauty products and accessories. The event was headed by the Unilever team which included Sanjiv Mehta, Unilever Philippines' Vice President for Customer Development Pong Ejercito, as well as Robina Gokonwei-Pe, Vice-President of Robinsons Retail Group, Robinsons Supermarket's General Manager Jody Gadia and Assistant Vice President for Merchandising Bobby Mabanta.


L-R: Levi Labra, Jim Lafferty and David Lyons

Archie Gupalor with the San Miguel Team

Kim Chui at Robinsons Otis

A compact store which caters to the residents and businesses in the Sta. Mesa and Paco areas, Robinsons Supermarket Otis features a wide selection of grocery products and fresh items, as well as Robinsons Supermarket's signature Whole Health section. The store also has an extensive Ready to Eat section with prepared meals and a bakery managed by The French Baker.

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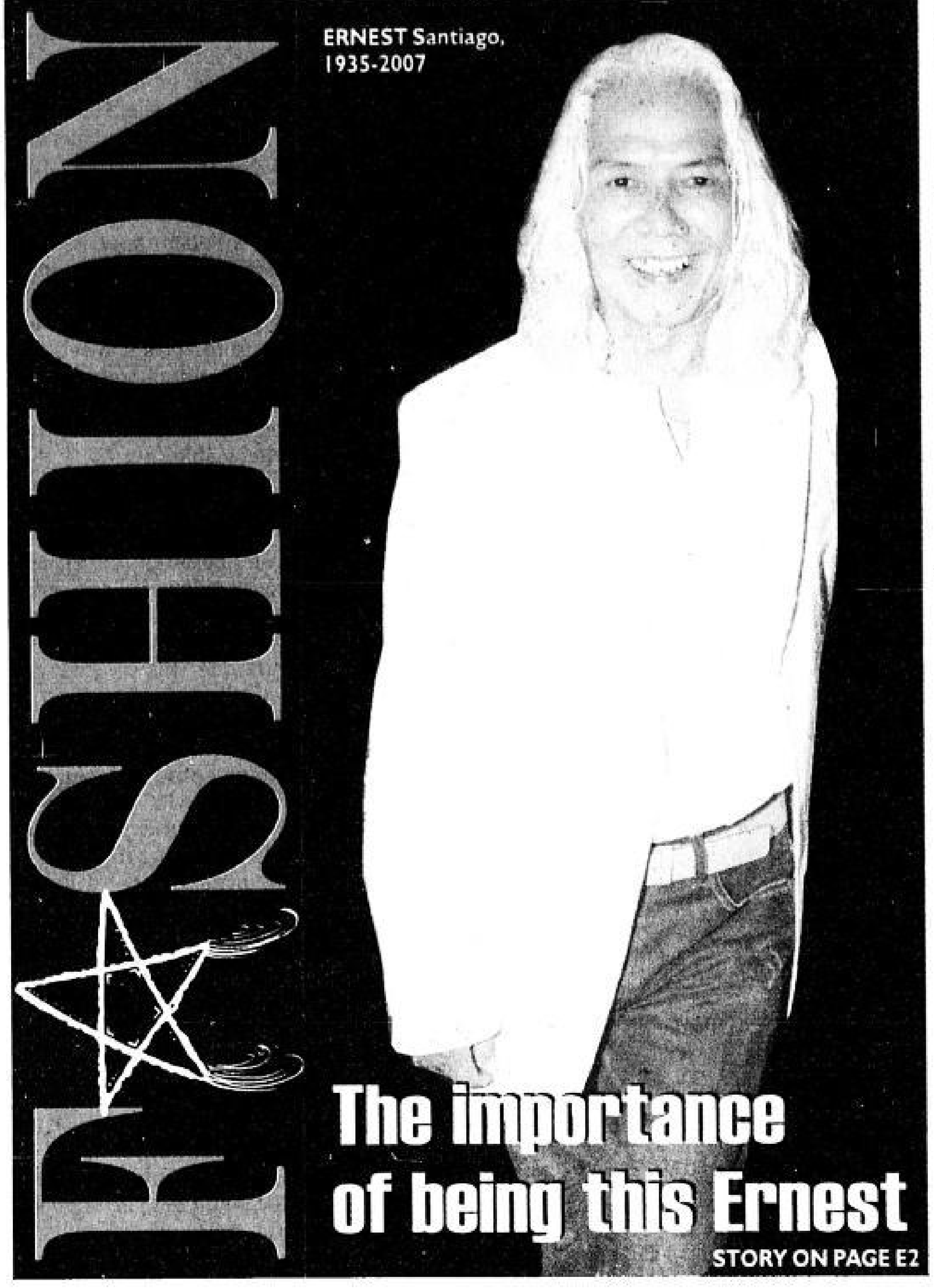

ERNEST Santiago, 1935-2007

The importance of being this Ernest

STORY ON PAGE E2

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The importance of being this Ernest

Compiled by Apples Aberin-Sadhwani
Photos by Sandro Mike Rieta

LAST SUNDAY, I WOKE UP TO find a dozen or so text messages informing me that designer Ernest Santiago was found dead, a victim of a homicide, in his Pagsanjan home at seven in the morning.

I was distressed by the tragic news. Ernest was someone I truly looked up to, not just as an artist and designer, but as a human being.

I met him some two decades ago when I was just a few years into my modeling career. Although I didn't quite witness his Coco Banana days (Coco Banana was the hottest club in Malate during the '70s and early '80s), I'd heard tales about Ernest and this legendary place from designer and makeup artist friends. So much so that it almost felt like I was actually there, partying a la studio 54 with the best and the brightest of the fashion world.

Back then, Ernest was already someone who was greatly admired by those around him. Not just because he threw the best parties in town, but also because he was one of the best, most creative fashion designers in the country. He was also known for his use of Philippine design inspirations in very modern ways.

Sari-Sari used to carry his line, and I would often to bump into Ernest in the store where I would buy his dresses. I did shows for him, too, and it was such a pleasure. He was always kind, appreciative and generous with his praise.

Needless to say, I was a big fan of the man and his work. My husband, who was my boyfriend then, would often urge me to don one of Santiago's black dresses whenever we would have an event.

I was saddened when he decided to move away from fashion and focus on furniture design and landscaping. I did attend one of his furniture exhibits and was once again impressed by his artistry and craftsmanship.

Today, INQUIRER Fashion and some of his friends and colleagues in the industry pay tribute to Ernest Santiago. He lived a full life and will always be remembered with great respect, love and admiration.

I'd known Mother Ernest, as we fondly called him, since our Coco Banana days in Malate. He might have been a little *suplado* and straightforward, but he was one of the best designers I had worked with. He was also a good friend. This is such a great loss to our industry.

Desiree Verdadero-Abesamis, model

I often came across the name of Santiago de Manila, a.k.a. Ernest Santiago, in newspapers and magazines while I was growing up as an impressionable cultural observer back in the late '70s and early '80s. Apart from being one of Imee Marcos' favorite designers back then, Santiago was known to us as the man behind the must-go-to bohemian nightspot in Malate called Coco Banana. In my young mind, and in the words of Melanie Marquez, Santiago de Manila was a living legend *na buhay*! Together with Helena Guerrero, Joe Salazar and Christian Espiritu, he represented the height of cool. Other than that, I've never had the chance to meet the man up close and personal until fairly recently when he was helping Margie Moran and her friends promote "Illusione," a gay musical revue, which the former Miss Universe produced. It featured Santiago, among a dozen or so gay impersonators, as he did his impression of Norma Desmond in the musical version of "Sunset Boulevard." By then, I was already a journalist/reviewer in the unenviable position of telling things as they were.

Dressed in the character's trademark flowing kaftan and turban, Santiago tried his best to capture Desmond's gnawing isolation and despair as he mouthed lines from "As if We Never Say Goodbye" during opening night. Not only did he appear a bit stiff on stage, his mouth wasn't always in synch with the lyrics—a mortal sin, if there ever was one, among impersonators. So much for the illusion!

Needless to say, I was far from impressed by his performance and eventually took note of it as I wrote a review of the revue in the Sunday edition of this paper's entertainment section. I thought that was the end of it, and promptly forgot about him and his lackluster turn in the ensuing years.

It wasn't until a year or so ago when I bumped into Santiago again with a collaborator in, of all places, Cebu. He was hired by the Shangri-La Mactan as a consultant to re-landscape its sprawling gardens. I had no idea if Santiago had the memory of an elephant, but knowing how he felt years after reading my scathing review was the last thing I wanted to find out. What if he berated me, slapped me or, worse, stared at me coldly with a raised eyebrow a la Desmond?

Indeed, beautiful as it was, the Shang Mactan lobby was the last place I wanted to be on earth that very instance. Just the same, I was bracing myself. *Walanghiya, 'eto sa 'yo...pak*!

But whether he held a grudge against me or not, he never showed it. In fact, to my surprise, he appeared as warm as ever, considering that it was only the second (and, sadly, last) time we had crossed each other's paths. He never mentioned anything about my review. On the contrary, he offered his hand and smiled broadly before asking me how I was.

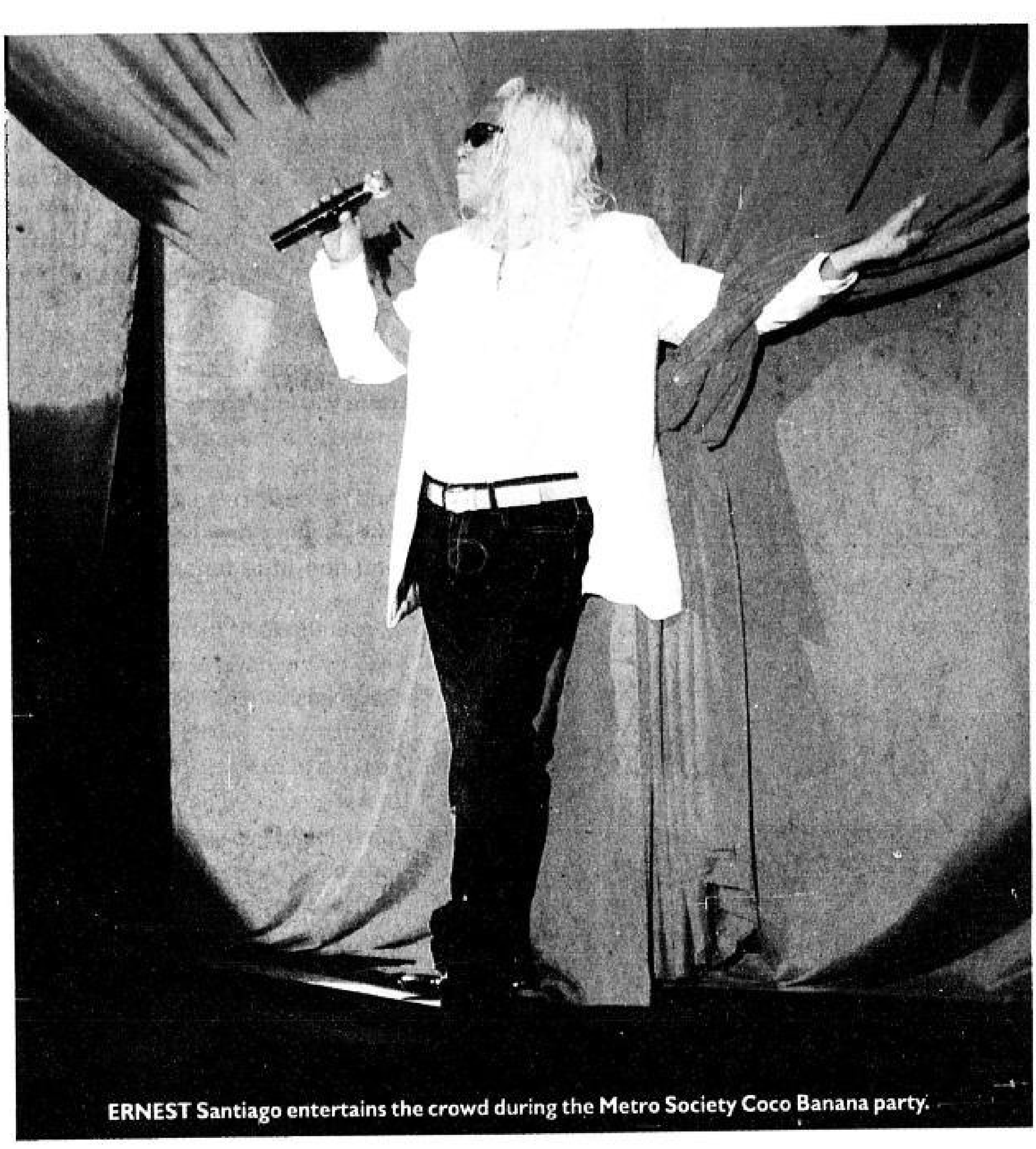
Still reeling from my unfounded fears, it gradually dawned on me a bit later in my room how Santiago and a handful of other artists had managed to remain prolific, successful and unpredictable despite the passage of time. They had an uncanny way of never letting criticisms affect them (or at least they're graceful enough not to show their true feelings in public) to the point of bogging them down as they moved on to the next big project.

Their resilience and ability to rise above and reinvent themselves despite such setbacks are what, I think, sets them apart from all crybabies out there.

For all I know, Santiago might have taken my criticism to heart since he never donned an impersonator's hat (at least, not that I know of) from then on, and instead focused on what he did best. The ability to listen and the humility to accept well-meaning criticisms are also hallmarks of successful artists.

Santiago de Manila, in my book, you will always be one class act. Too bad, I never had the chance to know more of you and your art. I wish we didn't have to say goodbye so soon.

Alex Y. Vergara, journalist



ERNEST Santiago entertains the crowd during the Metro Society Coco Banana party.

Ernest Santiago was perhaps one of the most creative designers in the industry, with a style that was distinctly his own. His artistry, which always reflected Filipino culture, is laudable. We will all surely miss a great artist.

Suyene Chi-Sia, model

Ernest Santiago was one of the pillars of Filipino fashion. His design creations in fashion, furniture and landscapes were always modern and contemporary—Filipino in spirit and drama. He initiated what today is "Moda Filipiniana" glam and style. Santiago de Manila was and always will be Philippine fashion's grand innovator. I will miss him, and I salute his talent, contributions and friendship.

Marden Iglesias, designer

I have always believed in the great genius of Ernest Santiago, having collaborated with him on several occasions, the most recent of which was the Bench Fever underwear show last year.

He was the style icon during the golden age of disco. He propelled color, vibrancy and excitement, having orchestrated the most number of memorable gatherings that brought Manila's high-brow social denizens to party with everyone else. He transcended the stigma of social classes and brought Manila together through his genius. Back then, when Ernest blew the whistle, everyone went out to have fun!

Ben Chan, creative director, Bench

Ernest was a good friend and talented artist. He had his own identifiable character, which made us realize that it was possible to be unique and still remain in tune with the world. He will definitely be missed.

Marina Benipayo, model

I remember meeting Ernest when I was still based in Paris. I was on vacation here in Manila and Ernest had his shop in Remedios Circle blessed that year. He invited me and I was very touched, because I knew nobody in local fashion then.

The next time we met was at my apartment in Paris. He had dinner with me. Those were very short but memorable moments, as Ernest was accommodating, smart, with great humor, and very fashion-conscious—like his works, I suppose.

Roy Gonzales, designer

When I started in 1976, my shop was located along Mabini in front of the Waldorf Astoria, and Ernest's shop was in Remedios Circle. He would often pass by the shop and look at my displays. He dropped by one time to ask if I would allow him to bring my dresses to Shoemart. He was already doing ready-to-wear back then. I agreed, and that started my RTW line.

He left me words of wisdom, which I will never forget. He said, "You know, if you want to be in the business, and if you want to gain the respect of your clients, you have to respect yourself first. So, cut your hair and straighten up your act."

Mike dela Rosa, designer

Ernest was such a fun friend to have. We'd find ourselves laughing over some trivial stuff. His genius was unequalled, and we have lost a moving force with his demise. Ernest, you will be sorely missed. You are home now. May peace reign in your soul.

Gerry Katigbak, designer

Ernest was the first fashion designer who used dark-skinned girls and *chinitas* as ramp and photo models, unlike older established designers who were stuck in their colonial mode using only *mestizas* with pedigreed names. He was a true pro who set very high standards and discipline among his chosen models, which in the end made modeling a respected career. He broke barriers and the old mindset, and gave every woman the chance to become a model whether she had a pedigreed name or not. This, along with the Perlas sisters, was what started the modeling industry in the country.

Louie Cruz, society writer

What happened to Ernest is a horrible tragedy. He was a gentle, private and artistic soul who had brought genuine artistry to Philippine fashion. The name Ernest personified his true being. I join everyone in deep prayer for his soul's repose and the immediate capture of his tormentors.

Tweetie de Leon-Gonzalez, model

His nickname was "taray" but in reality, he was not at all "mataray". He was quiet, but when he opened his mouth, he always made sense. He started the avant-garde, sometimes punk, but still wearable look here in Manila.

The last time I worked with him for a Bench show, he often asked me for my opinion on different matters. This meant a lot to me because he was someone I look up to. This showed that there was mutual respect and admiration, in spite of the fact that he was far more senior and knowledgeable.

Annette Coronel, model/director

My admiration for Ernest's career as a designer is enormous. He never failed to inspire me, and other designers, too, I'm sure. He was creative and innovative, and everything he did and touched came from the heart. He was passionate about everything he did and said.

We are never perfect, but what made Ernest perfect as a friend was the fact that he constantly inspired me. I will miss his input on fashion, interiors and other such subjects. I learned so much from him that I was able to apply to my work.

I also bought a lot of things from him, pieces that oftentimes he'd refuse to sell, so I'd force him. In every corner of my house today, Ernest is there because his things are there.

He is one designer that I really respected. I'm glad we met. I love the guy and I'm going to miss him.

Cesar Gaupo, designer

His fashion was exotic, his imagination wild. His dreams big and his production concepts grand! He knew when to exit, and when he left, everyone was always spellbound. Such was the enigma of Santiago de Manila. We simply called him Ernest.

Ogee Atos, director

Ernest was the first fashion superstar! He was a powerhouse of a person. He had such a high creative energy that surpassed the realm of fashion design. His culinary talents were just as legendary, as well as his interior design endeavors. He created the most inspired furniture I have ever seen.

He even came out in theatre and realized his acting fantasies. He lived a full life filled with unrestrained bravura. He was a true renaissance man personified! I will miss him dearly.

Rajo Laurel, designer

Ernest Santiago: innovative, brilliant and Filipino!

Boy Saulog, director

I belonged to that last batch who enjoyed and benefited from Ernest Santiago's Coco Banana. Aside from being one of Manila's creative and innovative fashion designers, Ernest should best be remembered as the artist who gave meaning to the word discotheque.

Tonichi Nocom, designer

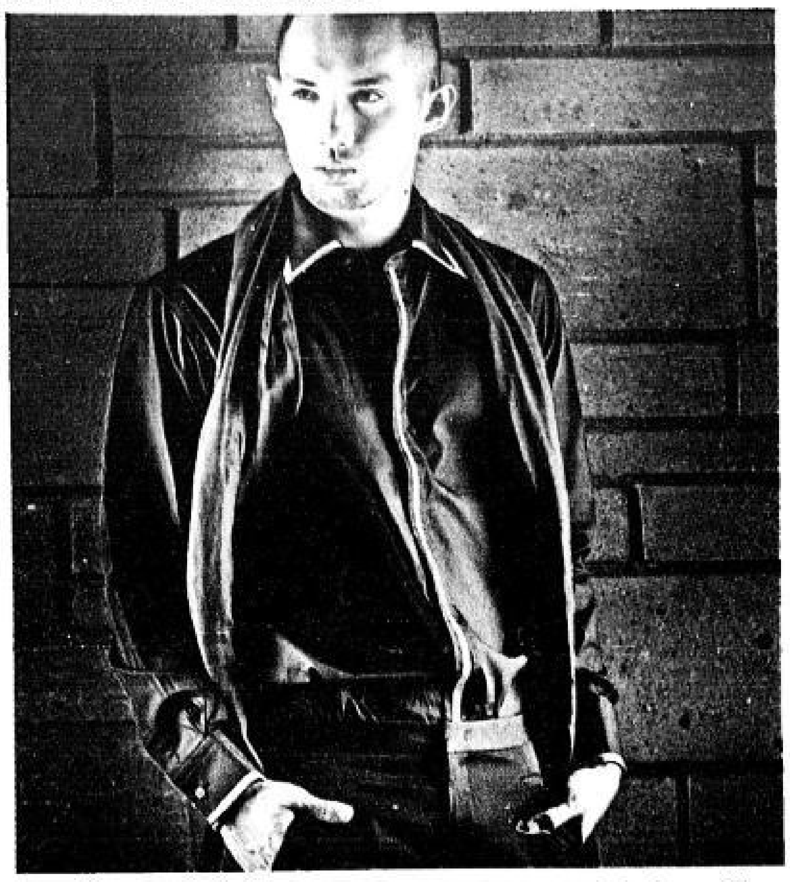
A true icon, Santiago wasn't just an avant-garde Filipino designer. He also created the most famous address, Coco Banana in Malate, that was known worldwide through published travel books. Sad that he had to go this way.

Lulu Tan Gan, designer

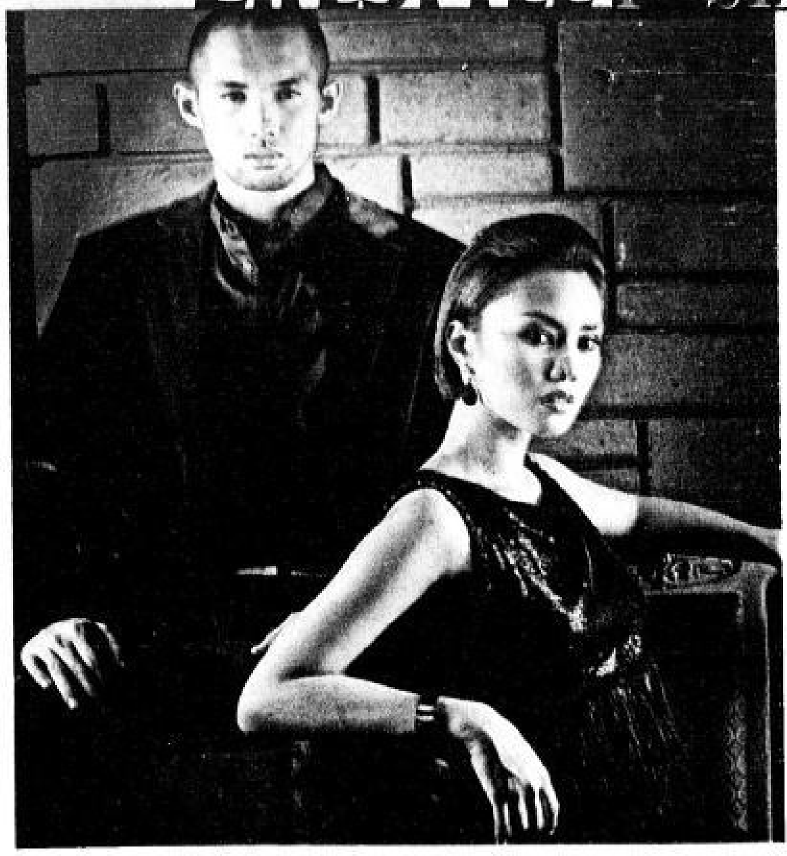
Ernest defined a generation and gave us Coco Banana, our home where we all expressed ourselves. He made fashion daring and fun!

Jackie C. Aquino, director

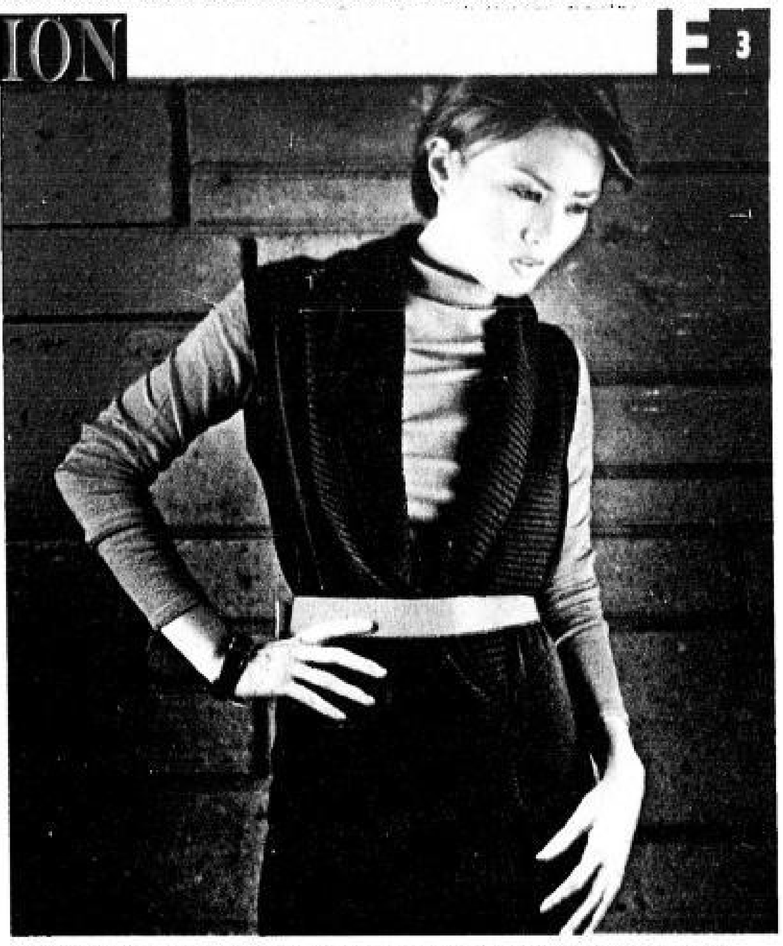
JUNGLE LOG JAM
RIO GRANDE RAPIDS
ANCHORS AWAY
PIRATES 4D
BACK TO P380*
PROMO IS EXTENDED!
ENJOY ENCHANTED KINGDOM'S 90s PRICES TODAY.
*WITH ANY P50 PEPSI COLA PRODUCT PURCHASE AT THE GATE
See flyers for details. Per DTI-Laguna Permit No. 8-09-320. Series of 2007.



HUGO Boss black long-sleeve polo, Calvin Klein black slacks and Zara scarf



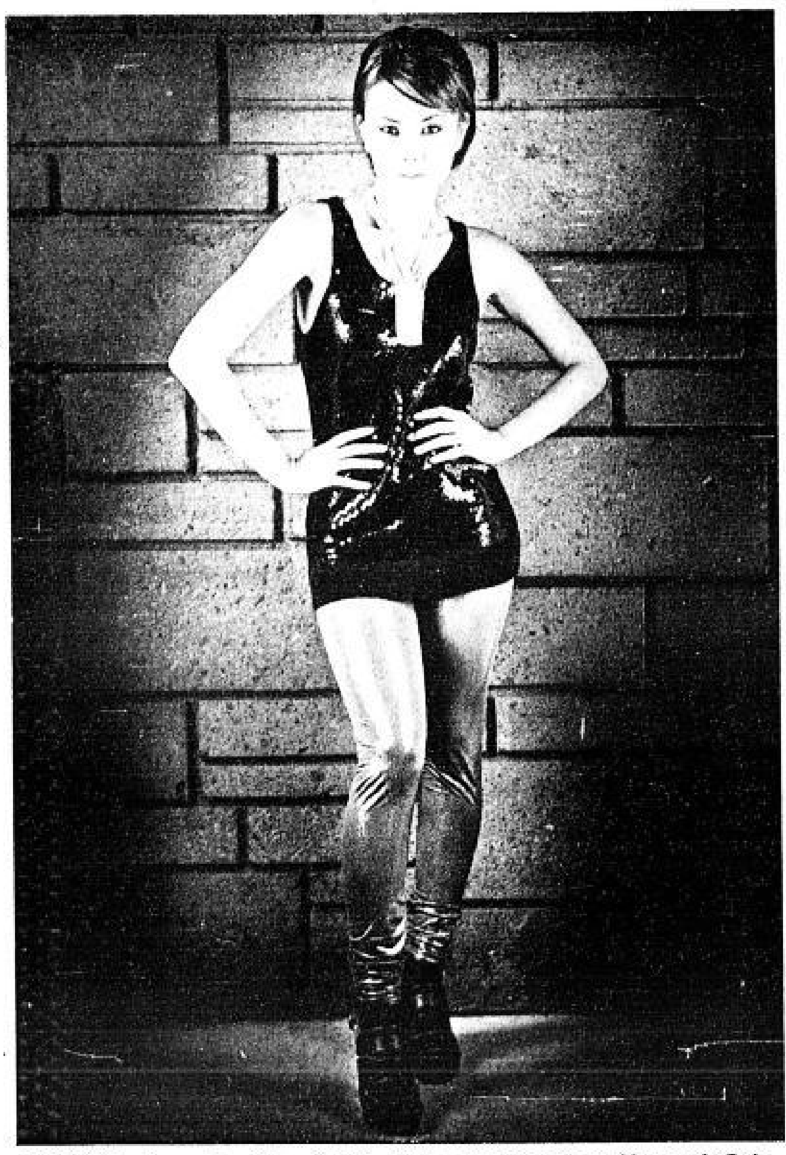
ON HIM: Calvin Klein long-sleeve polo, Hugo Boss jacket and black denims, Diesel white leather belt. On her: Zara sequined dress with ostrich feathers, Liz Claiborne drop earrings and bangle



JESSICA blue long-sleeve knit top, Mexx black knit dress, Lacoste belt and Liz Claiborne bangle

'Tis the season to stand out

ON HIM: Hugo Boss suit and Springfield belt. On her: Zara silver dress with jewel detail, Kenneth Cole ring and Anne Klein bracelet



DKNY black sequined top, Calvin Klein silver leggings, Kenneth Cole necklace and Nine West platform sandals

ADDING A BIT—OR even a lot—of shine to your wardrobe is an exciting move that will make you the star of any gathering this season.

Don't be afraid to go for tops or whole dresses accentuated with glassy beads or sequins. Not ready for an all out shimmer assault? Opt for glimmering accessories such as cuffs, shoes and jewelry.

For those elegant get-togethers, nothing can be daintier than a beguiling dress. From hooded, draped to pleated, from knitted to strapless, dress choices are as endless as your Christmas wishlist.

Take note of popular shades this season, from muted tones like mushroom and gray to bold colors like blue sapphire and fuchsia.

For men, nothing beats the classic look this Christmas. A crisp and clean long sleeve polo can take one anywhere, from the yearly family reunion to the company party. Just top it with a cool jacket to combat the cool breeze.

Step it up a notch by donning a suit, especially in shades such as dark gray and brown, which are very popular this season.

Whether these covetable items are for you or for that special person in your gift list, only Stores Specialists, Inc. has the brands that can provide you with all these choice finds.

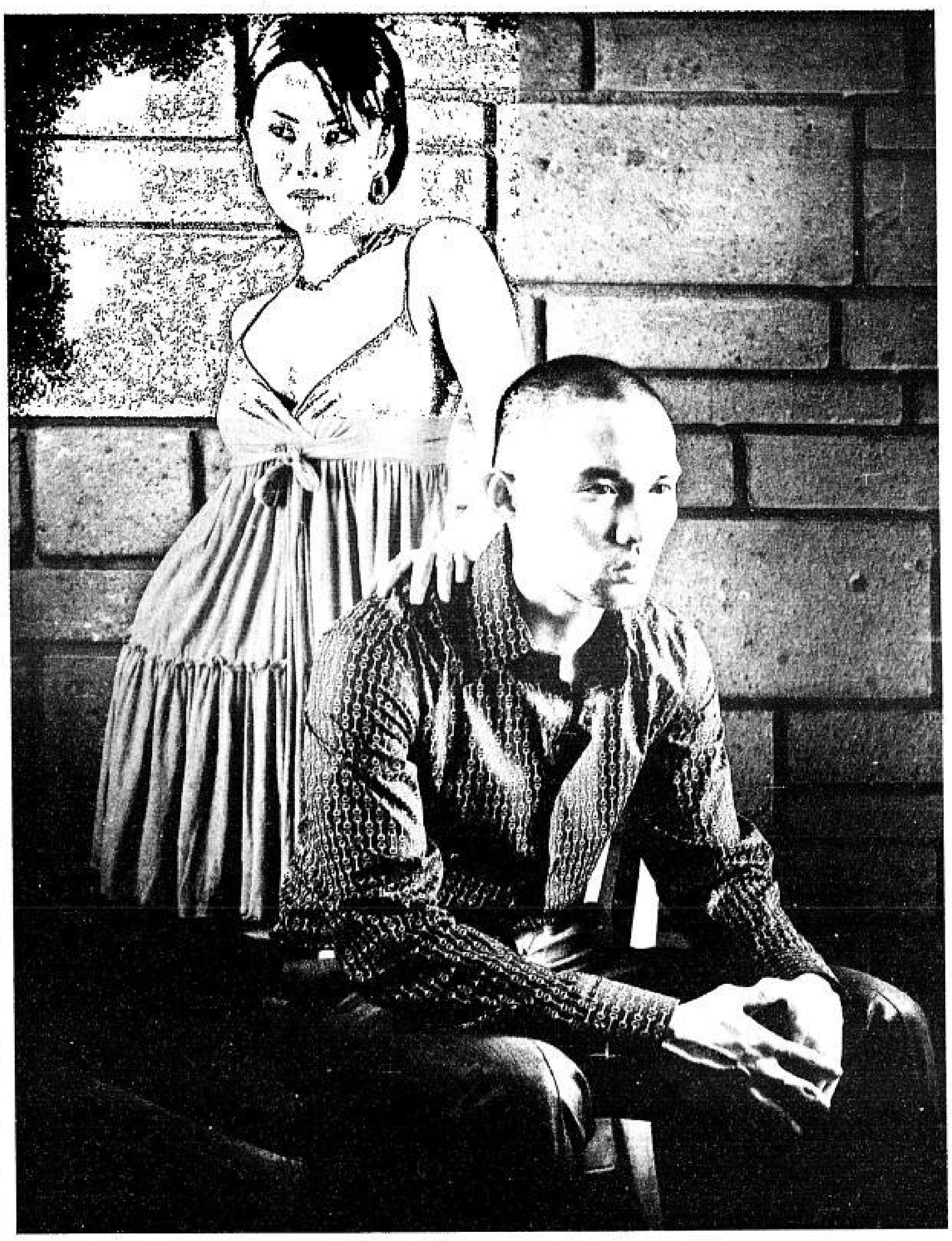
Metrobank credit card offers a special promo in cooperation with SSI, the company that brought to the country fab fashion brands such as Debenhams, Zara, Lacoste, Nine West, Furla, Armani Exchange, Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren.

Swipe your Metrobank credit card at any SSI store until Jan. 31, 2008 and receive an SSI gift certificate worth P1,000 for every P15,000 accumulated single-day purchase made at any SSI store.

Just present your transaction receipts and your Metrobank credit card at any of the designated redemption areas to claim your SSI gift certificate which you can even give as a gift this season!

Enjoy this early Christmas gift from Metrobank credit cards. Cardholders can redeem the free gift certificate up to March 31, 2008.

See flyers and tent cards for more details or visit any SSI store.



ON HER: DKNY pink dress, Kenneth Cole earrings, Liz Claiborne necklace.
On him: Zara long-sleeve polo and dark gray slacks and Hugo Boss belt

ON HER: Calvin Klein charcoal organza dress, Anne Klein necklace and bangles.
On him: Hugo Boss suit and Kenneth Cole watch

EXPERIENCE A MAGICAL SEASON EVEN IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN FLYING REINDEER.
SPEND A MAGICAL CHRISTMAS WITH LOU HILARIO ON DECEMBER 28, 29, AND 30.
HUM CHEERY YULETIDE TUNES ALONG WITH A CHRISTMAS CHORUS ON DECEMBER 16, 22, 23, 28, 29, AND 30.
TAKE YOUR TIME CHATTING WITH SANTA AT HIS ENCHANTED EMPORIUM, SINCE PARK HOURS HAVE BEEN EXTENDED THIS SEASON.
DECEMBER 12 – 14, 2007 10AM - 7PM
DECEMBER 15 – 21, 2007 10AM - 10PM (FIREWORKS AT 9PM)
DECEMBER 24 & 31, 2007 10AM - 7PM (FIREWORKS AT 6PM)
DECEMBER 22, 2007 – JANUARY 6, 2008 10AM - 12MN (FIREWORKS AT 10PM)
ENJOY AN EXHILARATING CHRISTMAS AT Enchanted Kingdom AS IT CELEBRATES ITS 12TH YEAR OF MAGIC!
Park Address: San Lorenzo South, City of Santa Rosa, [illegible] Tel. No: 830-21-11 to 16 IAAPA

ON HIM: Sanük Cruiser sandals, apparel by Tough Jeansmith. On her: Sanük Donna sandals, apparel by Salad

ON HIM: Sanük Donny sandals, apparel by Tough Jeansmith. On her: Sanük Bumper Car sandals, belt by Tough Jeansmith, apparel by Salad

ON HIM: Sanük Blender sandals and Golden Breed apparel. On her: Sanük Starlet sandals, apparel by Salad and Tough Jeansmith

Happy feet

FOOTWEAR BRAND SANÜK—Thai for "pursuit of happiness"—prides itself on bringing freedom, optimism, style and comfort to everyone's feet. The brand believes that if your feet are happy, the rest of your body will feel good, and it will show on your face.

For eight years now, Sanük has been making a lot of surfers' feet happy with its fun, functional, comfortable and unique footwear. The brand is designed for the global surf and water community.

But with its wide array of products that are apparently poles apart from the typical and dull types that proliferate out there, there's no wonder how even non-surfers have come to love Sanük.

Where else can you find Jellies, indoor-outdoor carpet flip-flops, Guatemala blanket thongs and super-cushy, super-commercial sandals? If those aren't enough, only Sanük has crazy Tarzan prints or variations of indigenous folk-art themes on sandals.

The brand isn't restricted to open-toe footwear. Check out the innovative Sanük Sidewalk Surfer collection, an interesting series of sandal-shoe hybrid that has the comfort of a sandal and the respectability of a shoe.

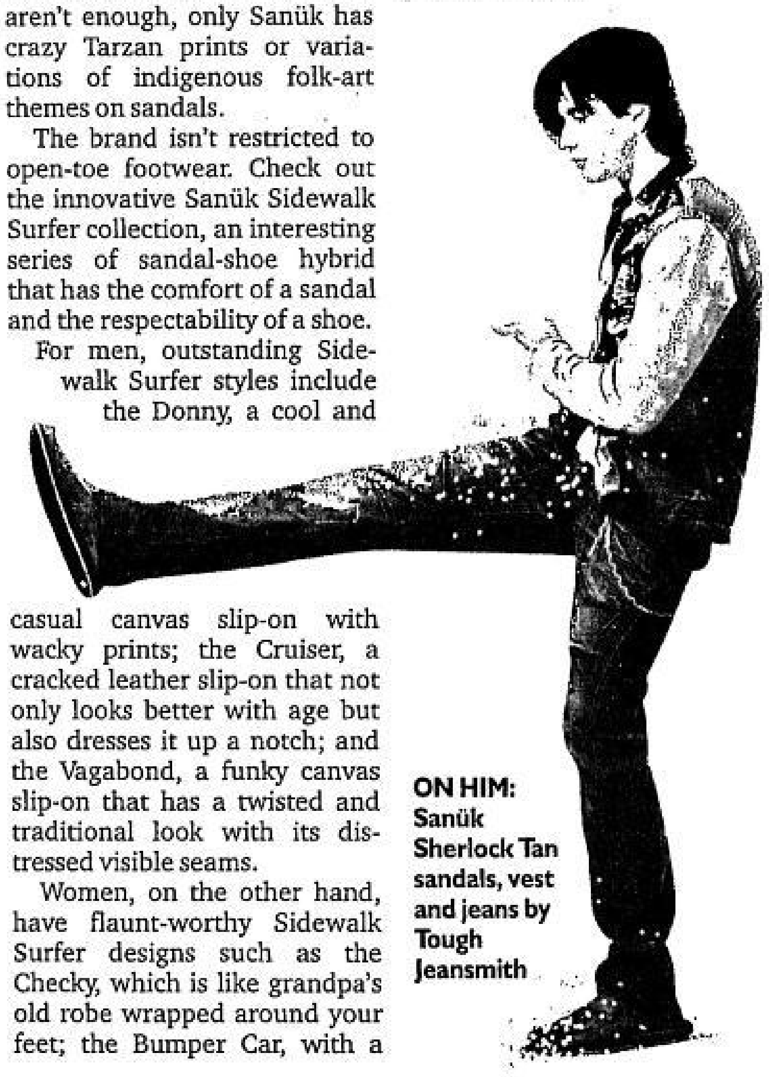
For men, outstanding Sidewalk Surfer styles include the Donny, a cool and casual canvas slip-on with wacky prints; the Cruiser, a cracked leather slip-on that not only looks better with age but also dresses it up a notch; and the Vagabond, a funky canvas slip-on that has a twisted and traditional look with its distressed visible seams.

Women, on the other hand, have flaunt-worthy Sidewalk Surfer designs such as the Checky, which is like grandpa's old robe wrapped around your feet; the Bumper Car, with a suede toe cap and a woven striped material; and the Scribble, which features a combination of custom art and embroidery for a totally one-of-a-kind look.

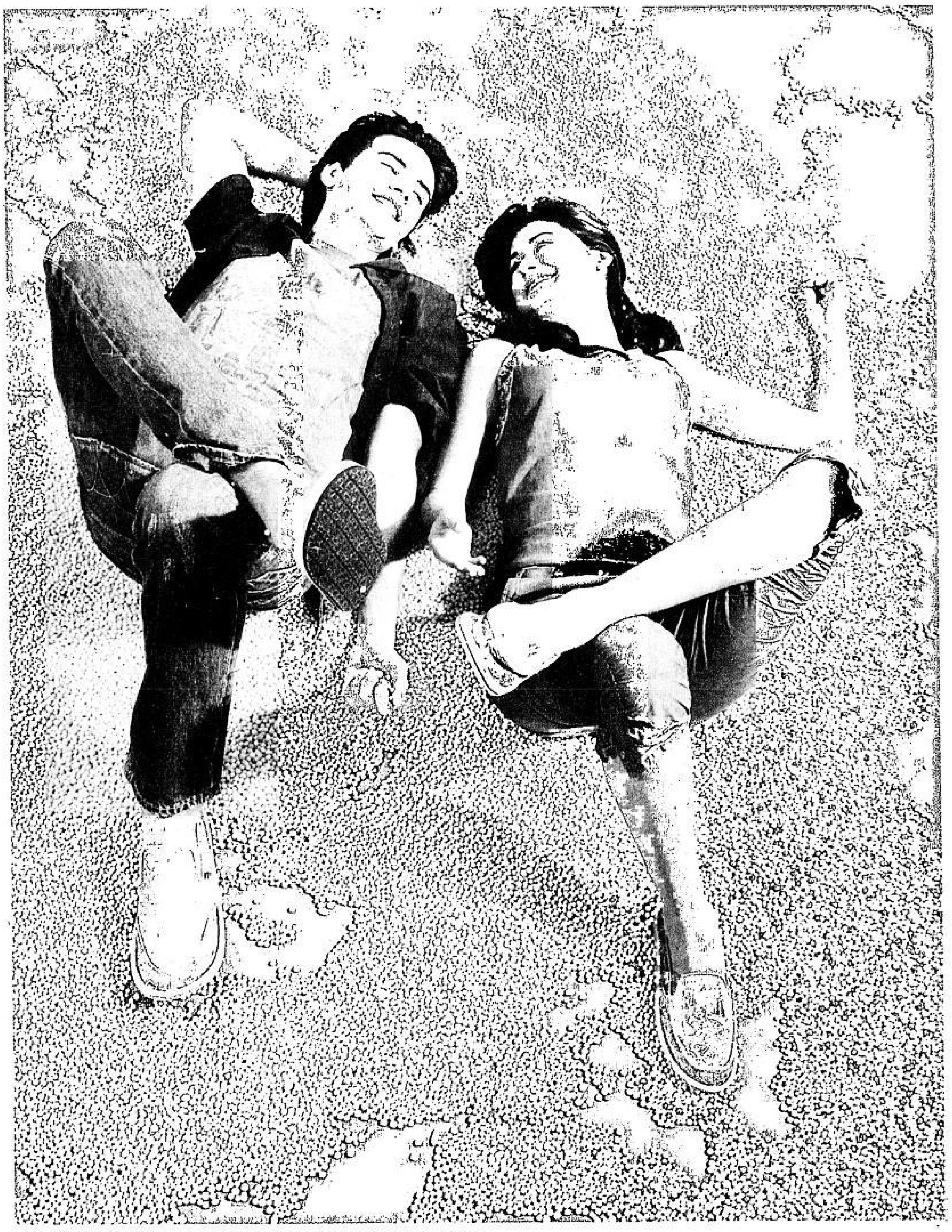
Thanks to the simplicity of architecture plus extraordinary sense of color and style of its various footwear, Sanük has quickly become the inside choice of both surfers and non-surfers worldwide.

Apart from looking splendid, Sanük is also technically advanced, as it goes to great lengths to make sure the sandals maintain high comfort standards.

The first-ever stand-alone Sanük store in the world is at Glorietta 4 of Ayala Mall. Sanük is also carried by Res-Toe-Run at TriNoma, ROX in Bonifacio High Street, Shoe Salon, Bratpack, Stoked Inc., Chocolate Clothing Co. and Rustan's Department Store.



ON HIM: Sanük Sherlock Tan sandals, vest and jeans by Tough Jeansmith



ON HIM: Sanük Drifter sandals, polo shirt and jeans by Tough Jeansmith. On her: Sanük Scribble sandals, aqua top by Salad, capri pants by Tough Jeansmith

FASHION FLASH FASHION FLASH FASHION FLASH FASHION FLASH FASHION FLAS

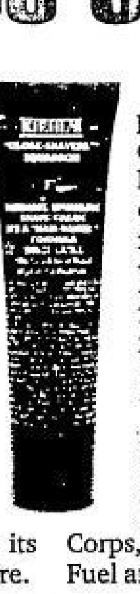
Shop for a cause on Dec. 21

KIEHL'S
LIP BALM
SPF 15
KIEHL'S
LIP BALM
SPF 15

FOUNDED AS AN OLD-WORLD apothecary in New York's East Village over 150 years ago, Kiehl's proudly opened its doors to Manila in its first Philippine store on Greenbelt 5's ground floor last October.

Bearing the same commitment to service and community, Kiehl's Philippines is pleased to offer the same products loved by generations worldwide with its no-frills packaging, customer dedication, and simple, efficacious quality through its extensive line of skin- and hair-care formulations.

Philanthropic support is a cornerstone of the Kiehl's philosophy. In "The Mission of Kiehl's Since 1851," written over 30 years ago, a belief in giving back to the communities in which it serves is clearly stated, and has been upheld since.



In line with its core philosophy, Kiehl's, with partners Globe and HSBC, presents its Shop-for-a-Cause event on Dec. 21 at its Greenbelt 5 ground-floor store.

Two hours of shopping will be dedicated entirely to a great cause. From 4-6 p.m., all proceeds from purchases made at the Kiehl's store will go to the children of Diether Ocampo's K.I.D.S. Foundation, the brand's first local beneficiary.

All Kiehl's product lines will be available for purchase, including cult favorites Crème de Corps, Yerba Mate, Blue, Facial Fuel and Lip Balms.

KIEHL'S
Stylist Series
KIEHL'S
Stylist Series
HEAT-PROTECTIVE SILK STRAIGHTENING CREAM

LIFESTYLE

FASHION

FASHION FORUM FASHION FORUM FASHION FORUM FASHION FORUM FASH

All I want for Christmas

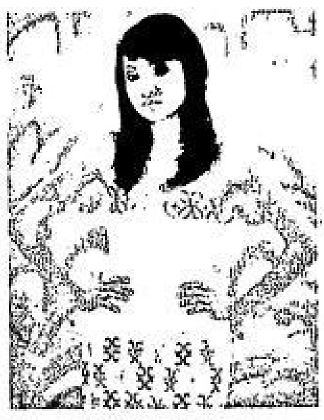
WHAT'S IN YOUR FASHION wish list this Christmas?

I'd love an Hermes Kelly in purple ostrich—the same bag that Vera Wang owns.

Ingrid Go,
entrepreneur,
Tresorie,
and bag blogger

I'd love for anyone to give me a pair of Christian Louboutin Pigalles in black, red or silver. Oh wow! These would be the best stocking stuffers! I can dream, can't I? Or a Goyard Jeanne handbag in red (my favorite color) customized with my KT initials!

Kate Torralba,
designer/retailer/musician



I'd much rather receive a trip with pocket money! Only there will I do the purchasing of a whole new wardrobe for a new year—a new 'fashion-forward' me!

Bianca Valerio, model, host,
stylist, makeup artist and
motivational speaker

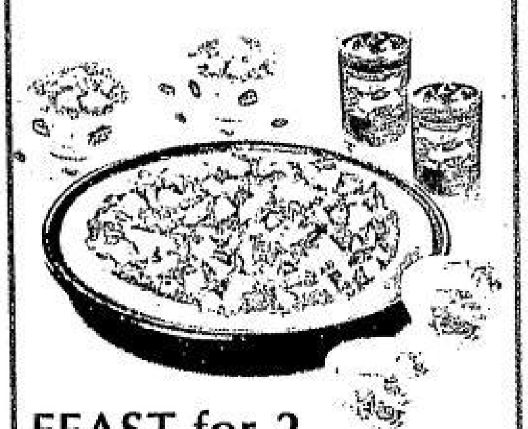
ALL I WANT/ F4

A Christmas Feast at Pizza Hut!

The Christmas season calls for special events. Undoubtedly, good food is a must when we prepare for our Christmas celebrations. We all look forward to delicious and abundant food preparations during this season.

Get ready to enjoy Pizza Hut's holiday offering-Triple Chicken Pizza! Savor three times the full flavor of chicken, roast, smoked, and chicken ham, with a tangy sweet pineapple glaze. This fresh, hot pizza, glistening with golden brown glaze and pieces of pineapple, cucumber and cilantro is definitely a must-try at all your Christmas parties. What's more, value-packed meal bundles, featuring the new Triple Chicken Pizza with side dishes and fruit salad makes this a perfect meal with family and friends. Try the new Triple Chicken Pizza at your nearest Pizza Hut!

For more yummy updates on the country's favorite Pinaka-Pizza, visit www.pizzahut.com.ph.

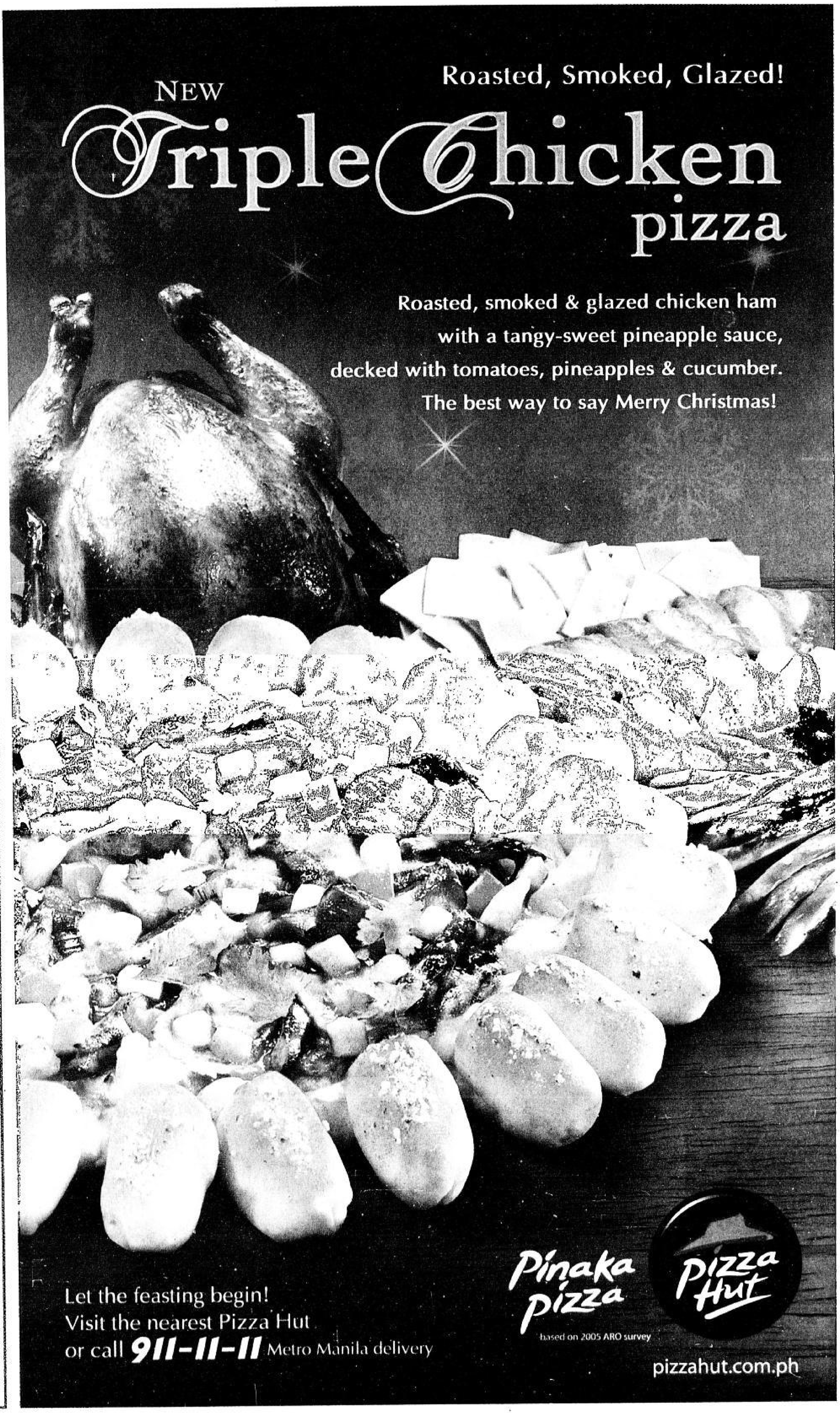


FEAST for 2

It's a Christmas Feast for 2 for only P399! Triple Chicken Pizza (Reg.); 2 orders Cream of Mushroom Soup; 2 orders Fruit Salad ; 2 glasses of Pepsi

FEAST for 4

It's a Christmas Feast for 2 for only P699! Triple Chicken Pizza (Family) ; 2 orders Spaghetti Bolognese; 4 orders Fruit Salad ; 4 glasses Pepsi


Roasted, Smoked, Glazed!
NEW
Triple Chicken
pizza
Roasted, smoked & glazed chicken ham
with a tangy-sweet pineapple sauce,
decked with tomatoes, pineapples & cucumber.
The best way to say Merry Christmas!
Let the feasting begin!
Visit the nearest Pizza Hut
or call 911-11-11 Metro Manila delivery
Pinaka pizza
based on 2005 ARO survey
Pizza Hut
pizzahut.com.ph

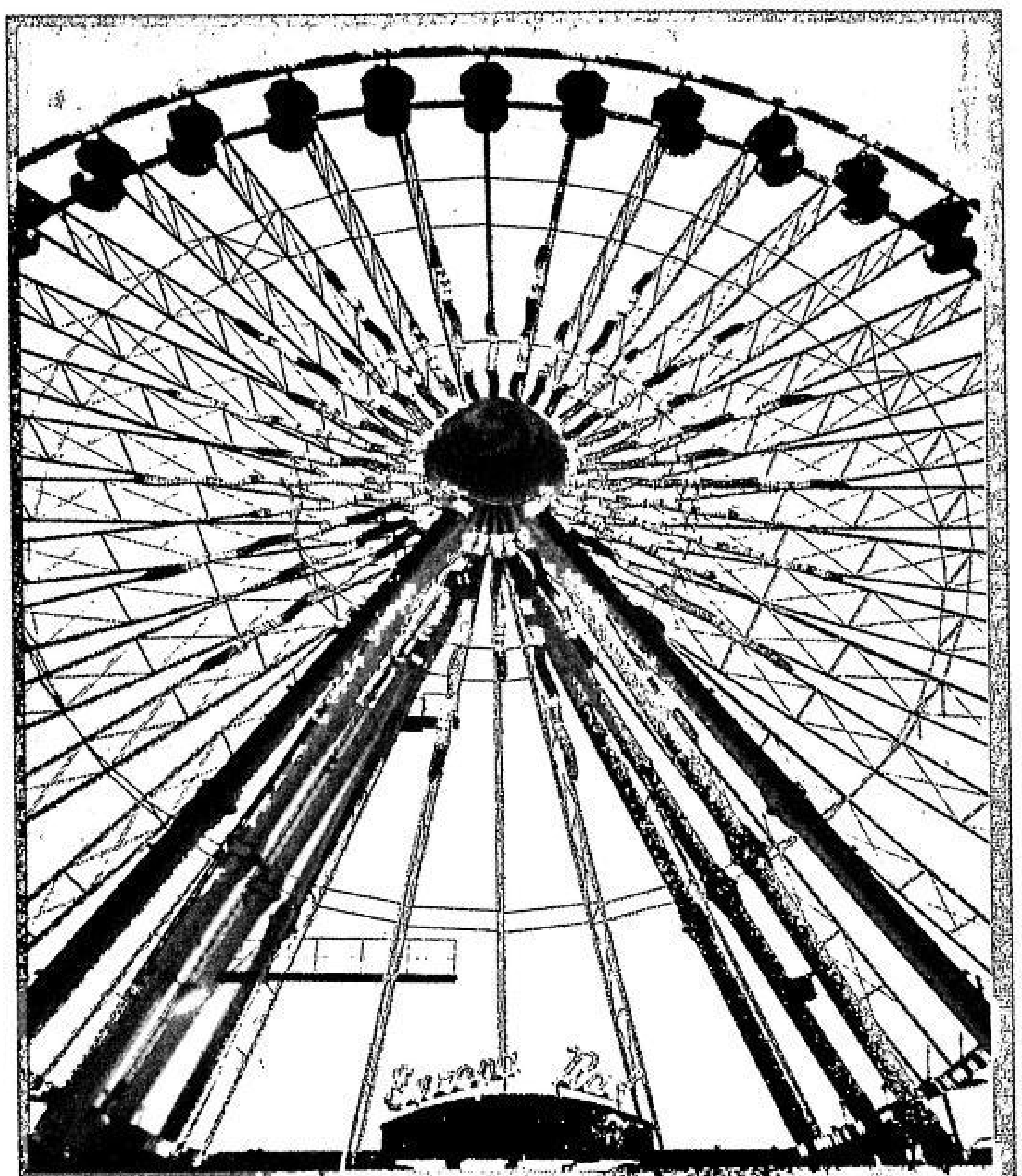
Pixel Perfection: The World's First 5-Me

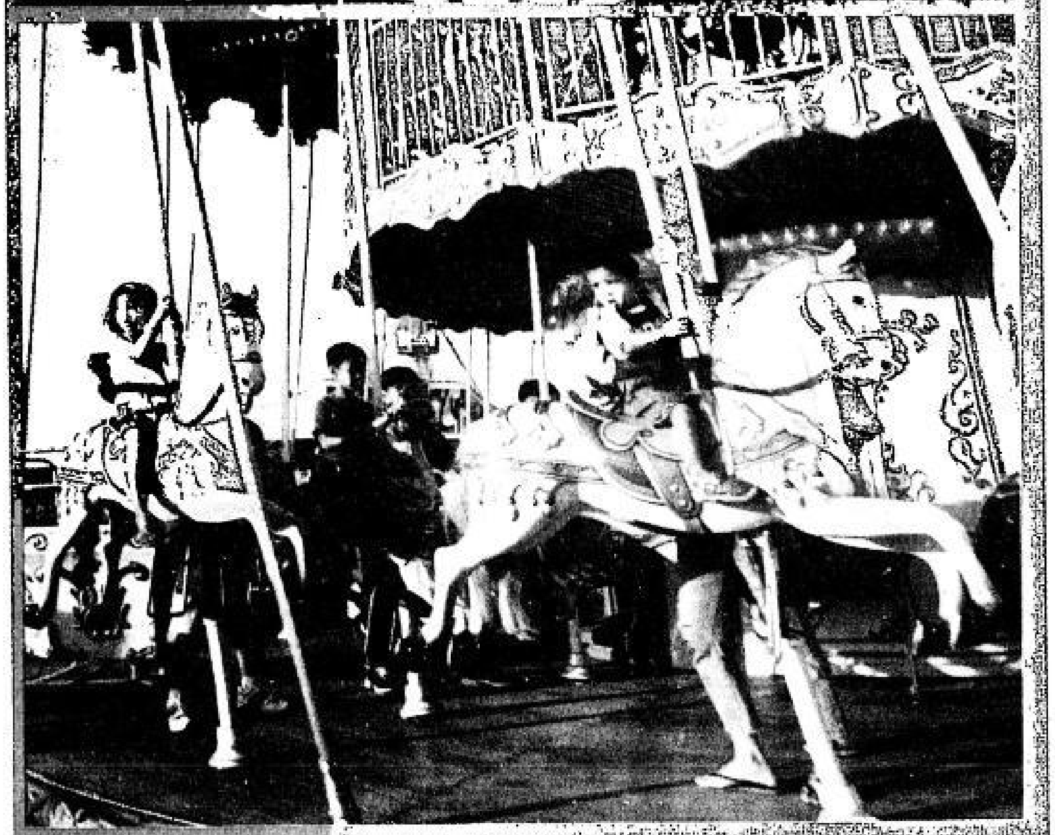
On one weekend, five top-notch photographers and their apprentices roamed the streets of Manila to capture people, places and moments using the world's first 5-megapixel camera phone.

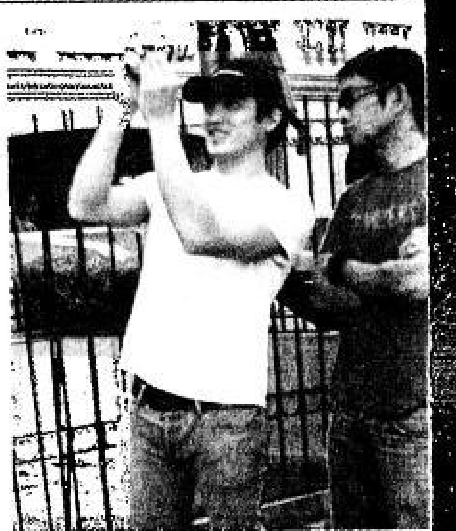
That is the Weekend Getaway, organized by Samsung in celebration of the launch of its latest camera phone to hit the market-the Samsung G600.

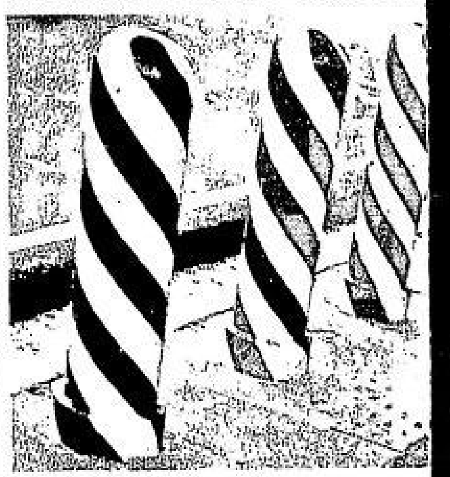
From Quiapo to Binondo to Roxas Boulevard, professional photographers Paolo Pineda, Noelle Hernandez, Jake Versoza, Ronnie Salvacion and Steve Tirona mentored their apprentices Miguel Miranda, Mario Lozano, Pol Beltran, Jan LaÓ and Raena Abella as they took snapshots of Manila using the Samsung G600.

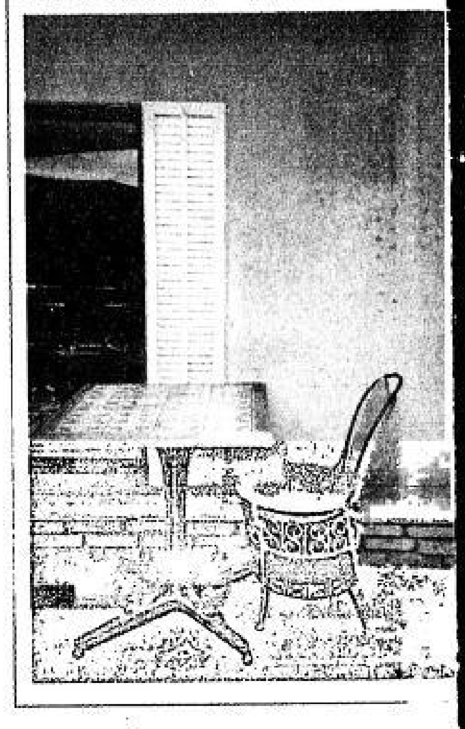
Fusing design, photography and the ultimate in phone functionality, the Samsung G600 is the camera phone that even the pros will love. It has various modes for picture-taking sessions and allows users to get creative with their shots. The 5-megapixel camera also has a built-in Power LED flash, image stabilizer and image enhancer for high quality pictures, best seen through the Samsung G600's 2.2" LCD with 16 million colors. Users can also share their creative shots with others through the 5-megapixel multi-function imaging system and full Bluetooth v.2 connectivity. There is also the embedded MP3 player and the NetFront Browser v. 3.4, which provides PC-like browser capabilities on the mobile phone, providing users total audio-visual enjoyment, all housed in a fashionable black two-toned slider shell with a tiny 102 mm by 47.8 mm by 14.9 mm frame.



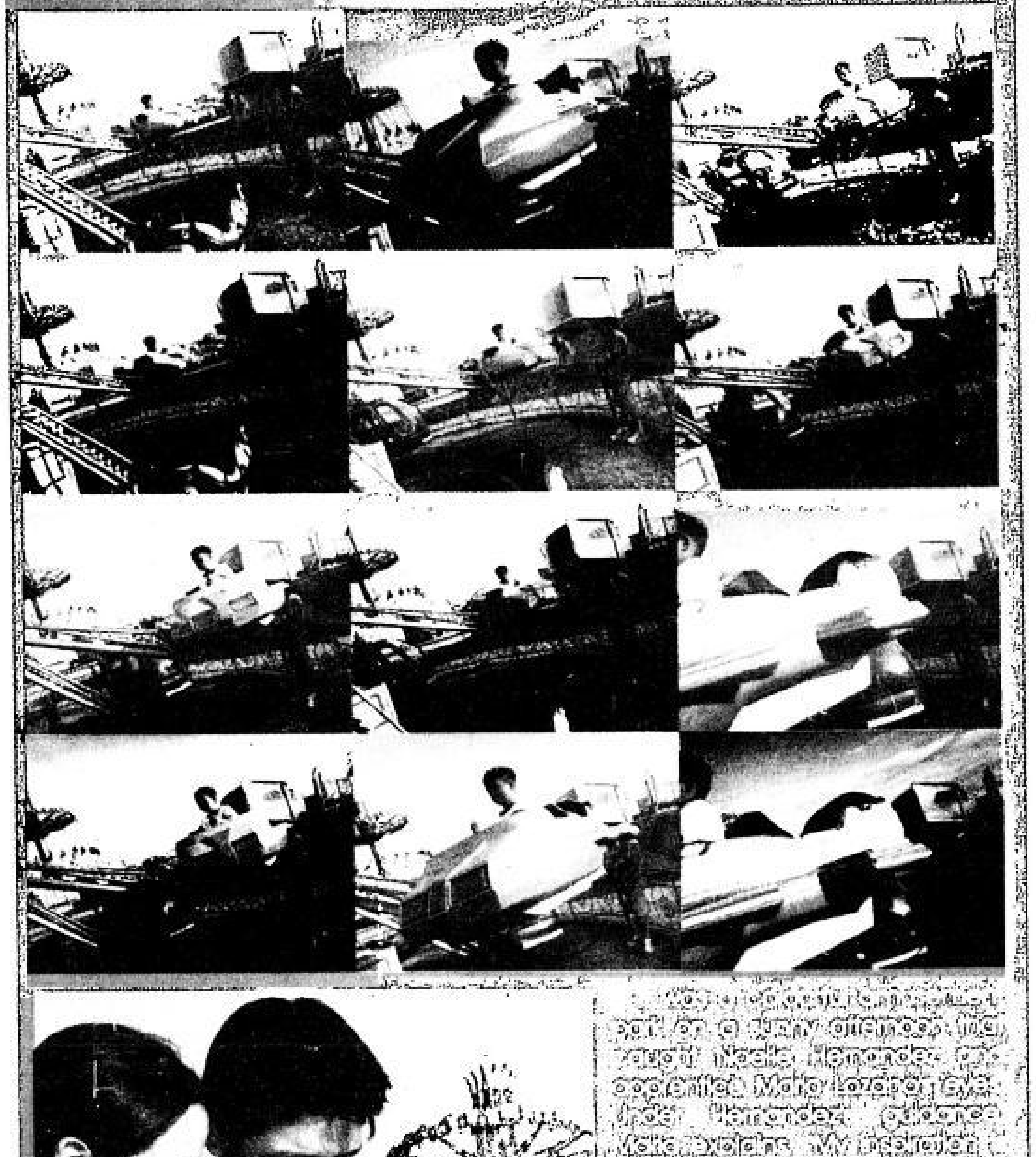








For the team of Paolo Pineda and Miguel Miranda, Baywalk is the place to be to capture pictures with character. Among the photos apprentice Miguel took as guided by Paolo, his favourite was the one of the fisherman on the ledge, illuminated by the sunset. "I was inspired by the candor of everyday people," he says, as also shown by his other photos that feature street children and regular folks. The Samsung G600 was a fun camera phone to use, he claims, because of its many features. "I enjoyed tinkering with the camera because it gives you many options on the output of the images. I also like how sleek it is that you barely notice it in your pocket."



[illegible] park on a sunny afternoon, [illegible] caught Noelle Hernandez and apprentice Mario Lozano's eyes. Under Hernandez's guidance, Mario explains, "My inspiration [illegible] is having fun as a kid and not caring about anything else [illegible] being lost in it. A giant ferris wheel, [illegible] the carousel and other [illegible] at the park [illegible] are just some of the subjects of his photos. The one with the kid on the carousel [illegible] determinedly [illegible] very symbolic of a lot [illegible] reminds me of the idealism of youth that a lot of people can relate to." The Samsung G600 captured the sharpness of colors and details with its 5-megapixel camera and built-in image stabiliser and image enhancer.

Jake Versoza and Pol Beltran roan

jects to capture with the Samsung G

riosities at the esquinitas of Quiapo. P

many ways that she can arrange the

manipulate the outcome of the pic

scribes in the photo and conceptual

pact by the act of being in a photogr

a black-and-white photo of a statue c

like these are banal things that we n

street photography with portraiture."

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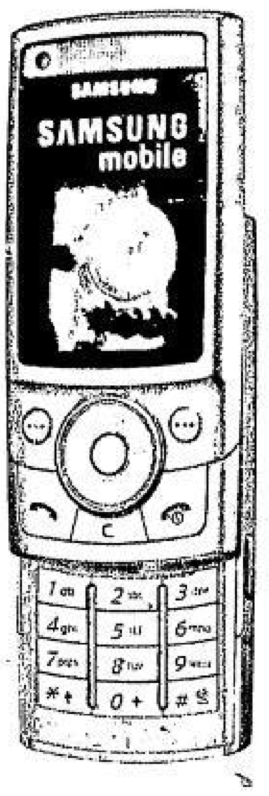
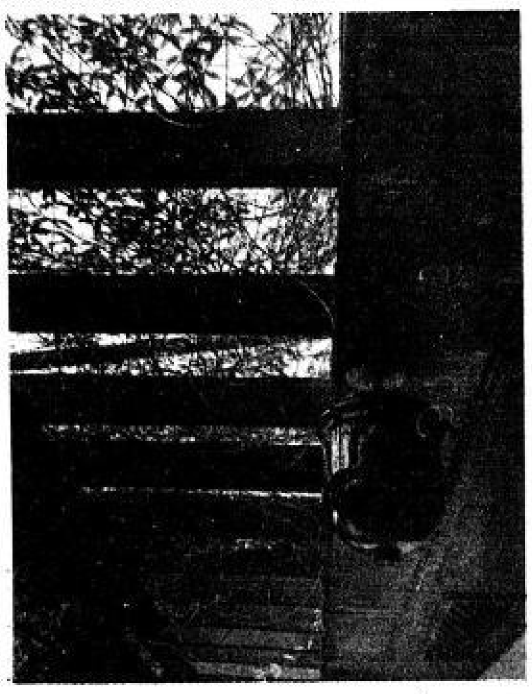
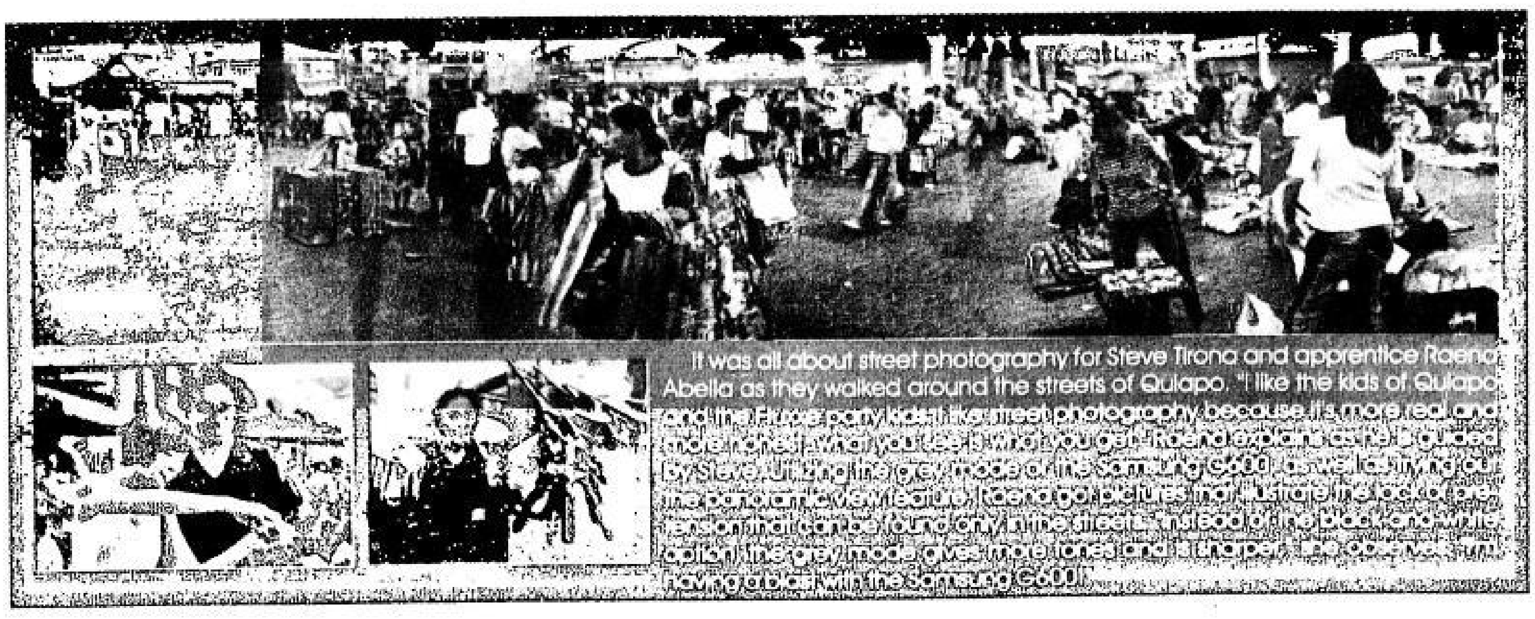
egapixel Phone Samsung G600



Interpreting classic pop culture influences into solo pictures was Ronnie Salvacion mentorship hallmark for Jan LaÓ's. "Since my mentor Ronnie made music, we decided that I do movies," Jan reveals. Relating the essence of his pictures with that of some of the most popular films, Jan's works feature still life that communicates vitality. Entitling his works as "Serendipity" and "Great Expectations," Jan played a lot with the white balance feature to achieve the colors he was going after. "It was such a trip taking photos using the Samsung G600," he adds. "It was fun!"

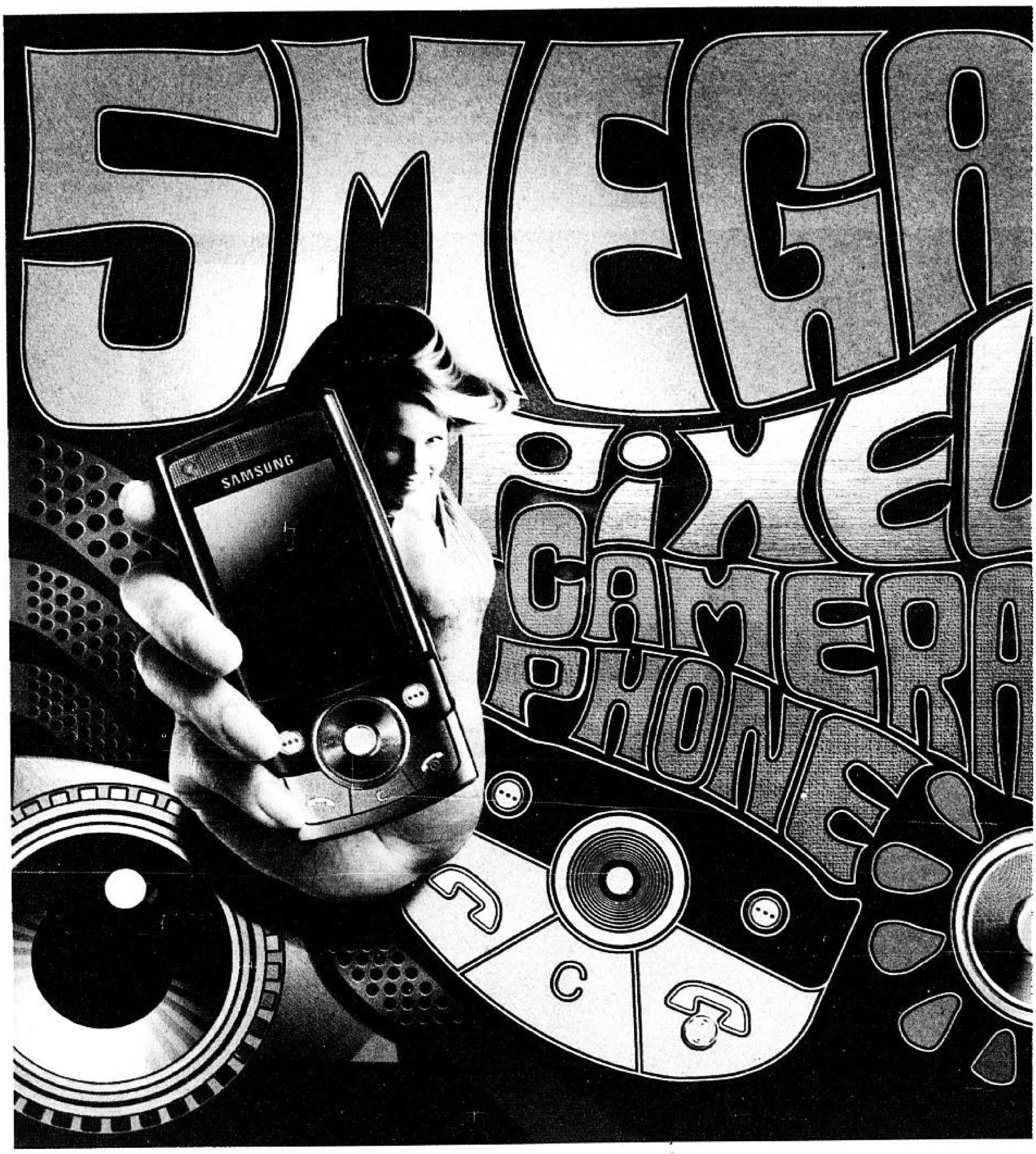


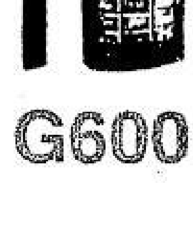


It was all about street photography for Steve Tirona and apprentice Raena Abella as they walked around the streets of Quiapo. "I like the kids of Quiapo and the [illegible] party kids. I like street photography because it's more real and more honest. What you see is what you get," Raena explains as she is guided by Steve. Utilizing the grey mode of the Samsung G600 as well as trying out the panoramic view feature, Raena got pictures that illustrate the lack of pretension that can be found only in the streets. "Instead of the black-and-white option, the grey mode gives more tones and is sharper," she observes. "I'm having a blast with the Samsung G600!"

GLORIA IN EXC

ned Quiapo and Binondo for eye-catching sub-
600. Showing an affinity for the many religious cu-
l marvels at the clearness of the images and the
settings of the Samsung G600 camera in order to
tures. "I want to maintain what the camera de-
y alter it," she says. "These subjects gain visual im-
aph and having them presented as art." She cites
f Jesus carrying the cross as her favorite. "Objects
nay ordinarily ignore or just pass by. I want to mix





G600

imagine the power of 5

Imagine the colors and images inside a new generation of camera phone. It's style and technology bursting with clarity and vibrancy, all to the power of 5 Megapixels. Could this be the next trend? With the Samsung G600, it's not that hard to imagine.

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SAMSUNG

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All I want for Christmas

WHAT'S IN YOUR FASHION wish list this Christmas?

A fab accessory by Bea Valdes or Wynn Wynn Ong. Still waiting for my new dress by Joey Samson!

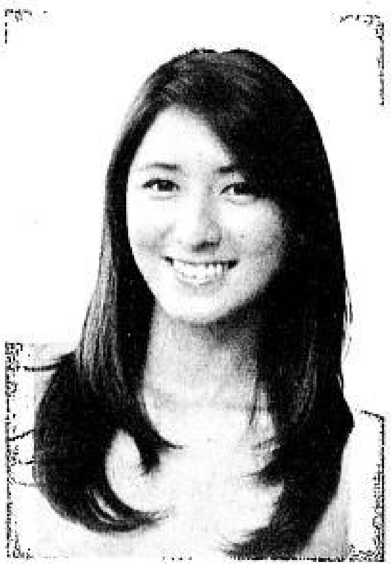
Mel Cuevas,
editor in chief, Metro

In my fashion wish list this Christmas are all bags: Chanel satin and calfskin weave handbag, Kate Spade white patent bag, Louis Vuitton Antigua Canvas Cabas tote, Chanel Cambon Tote and Louis Vuitton Monogram Olympe Nimbus

Bubbles Paraiso,
model/actress

-Chopard Happy Black Heart
-Big Fendi Whipstitched Clutch
-Ana Rocha's Rock creations; ring or earrings
-Victoria Marin's woven leather bangles
-Cesar Gaupo's killer heels
-Lots of Myth RTW

Ruby Gan, COO, ShopManila, Inc



A Kate Spade Pop Clinton Street Cally laptop case or a Beam metallic Lacoste footwear

Dindi de Leon,
model/PMAP member

An ivory Chanel 2.55 with gold hardware! It is absolutely divine!

Kelly Misa, model

A new pair of Helmut Lang jeans, if they still make them. My favorite pair was stolen in the sampayan. Kakainis! Oh well, Merry Christmas na lang to the magnanakaw!

Rhett Eala, designer

I want the Rolex Cellini Prince! And I am still waiting for Rhett Eala to send me that Philippine Map T-shirt as a Christmas gift!

Ito Kish, design consultant
and retailer

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5041 Series of 2007

A week of winter ski holiday with my loved ones

Carla Sibal,
editor in chief,
Mega magazine

A designer bag. It's about time that I owned one! To be specific, a Gucci Indy bag in rust guccissima leather. This bag is calling out to me!

Cat Juan,
associate beauty editor,
Metro magazine

A week's stay at the Anantara Resort at the Maldives with a boy

Anne Bella,
fashion stylist/writer

For myself:
-A Philip Lim one-shoulder cocktail dress in a bright color
-A Victorian lace cape, tweed high waist wide leg pants from Kate Moss for Topshop. In fact, almost anything from her collection.
-Loubotin satin peep toe open heeled sandals in pink.
-Prada floral print asymmetrical dress, or more realistically the Zara version, and matching satin rose clutch.
For mankind:
-An end to skinny jeans

Kaye Tinga, executive director,
Lightomorrow Foundation

My list includes Marc Jacobs black Wayfarers, the perfect super high-heeled black satin pumps. I'm also in love with a rough cut citrine ring set in a yellow gold chain link design, but it could be way above my budget.

Carmina Sanchez,
marketing communications
consultant

A new wardrobe from Myth, bangles from Victoria Marin, and am in desperate need of a good pair of jeans!

Amina Aranaz-Alunan,
bag designer

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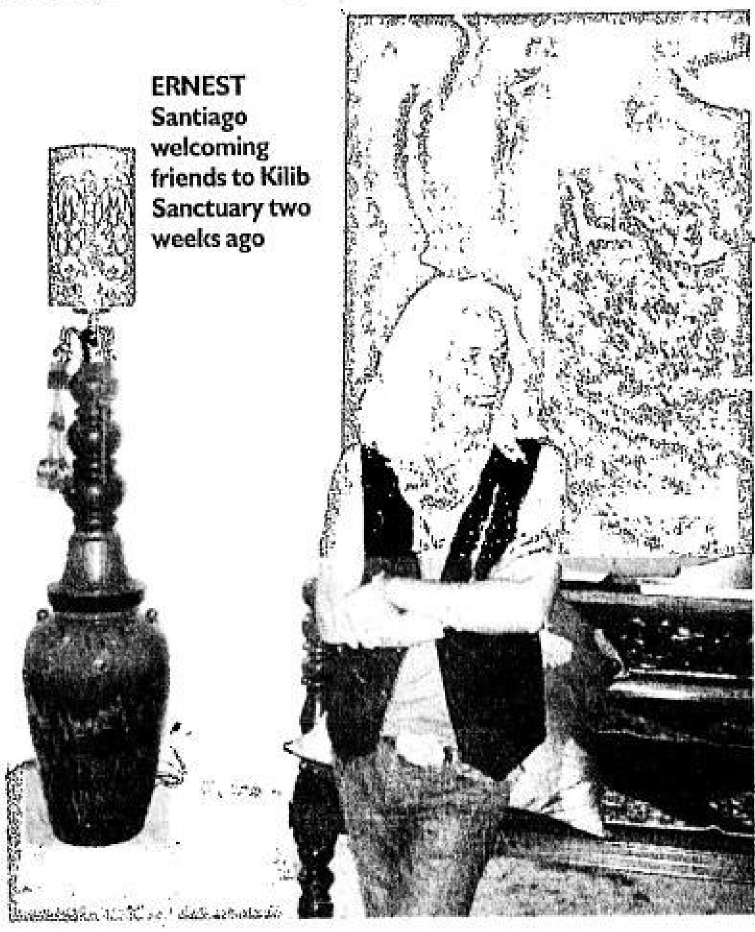


ERNEST Santiago welcoming friends to Kilib Sanctuary two weeks ago

LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Sioson San Juan

Ernest Santiago is finally truly free

Fashion's wild, creative spirit had a feast of a life

WHEN WE WERE with **Ernest Santiago** a month ago, I never thought that it would be my last moment with a dear and loyal friend.

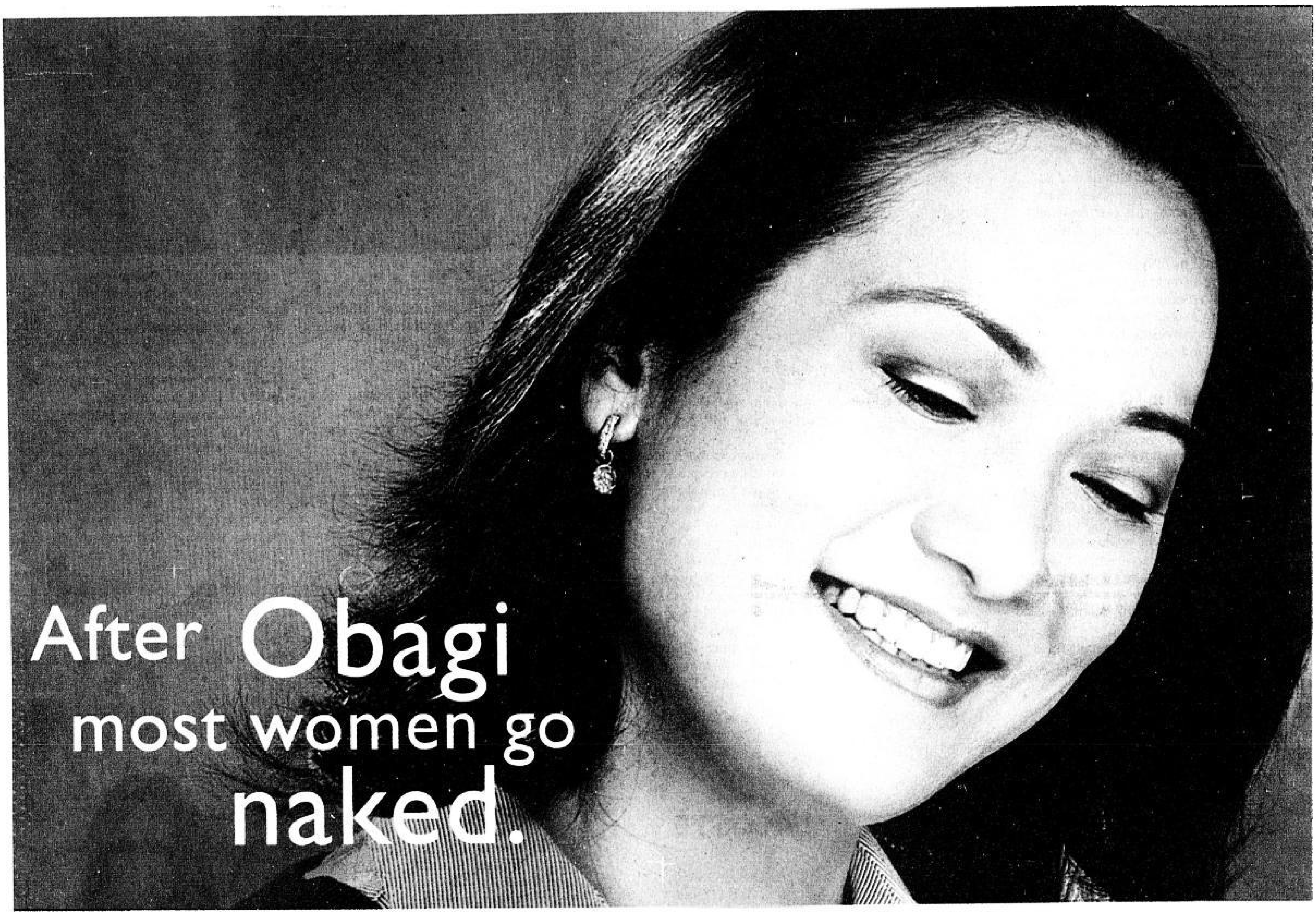
We had a fun dinner in his Pagsanjan home—a lovely sprawl with a pavilion-style home that spread out to a lush garden. This airy, open home, a month later, would be the scene of his violent death.

Ernest was found dead early Sunday morning in his bedroom. He had been struck on the head, his room looted for cash and valuables in what early report said was robbery.

Paolo, a nephew whom he adopted as a son, was cleaning the garden, when, throwing a far glance at Ernest's room—which was visible from the garden—he noticed the blood-stained pillow. Until that moment, Paolo thought his uncle, who lived alone, was just sleeping in late.

Strange, but though Ernest was believed to have been killed between midnight and 3 a.m., he was seen at dawn Mass at Pagsanjan

ERNEST/ G2



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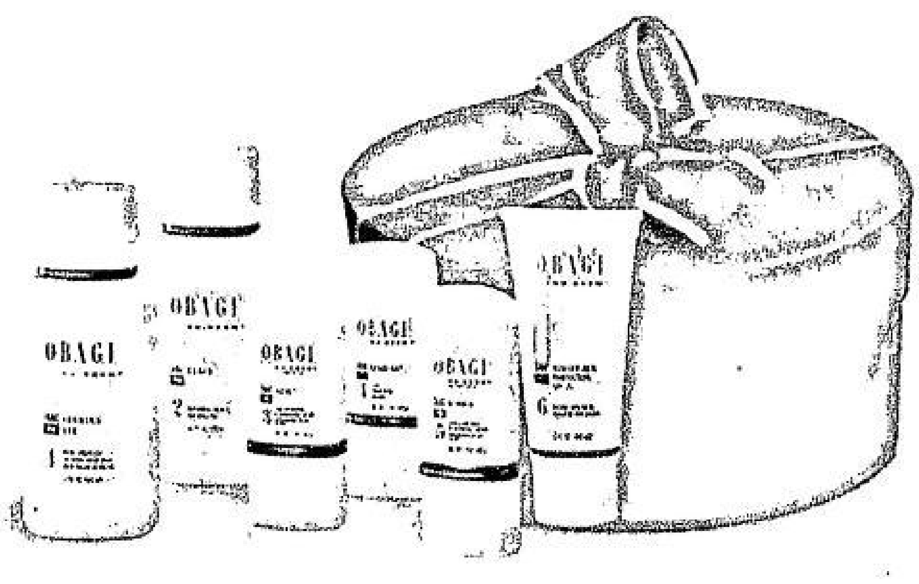

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Ernest Santiago . . .

From page G1

church, around 4 a.m.

Ernest—his flowing white hair and flamboyant character—was known in Pagsanjan where he'd lived for two decades. A policeman saw Ernest walking by and waving at him.

"That's his ghost, no doubt," someone said at Ernest's wake last Monday at Santuario.

"*Tallada kayo!*"—Ernest would have screamed had he been around to hear us speculate about his post-death sighting. That was his trademark expression—spat out to release either his annoyance, awe or amusement.

Culinary artist

We were on a day tour of Pila, Laguna, that Monday a month ago when Ernest insisted we drive on to Pagsanjan. Now we're glad we did.

Ernest served his popular *tulingan* pasta and *pako* salad in the lanai. You felt free and relaxed in Ernest's home because there was hardly any wall to impede your view or the breeze. The house was a visual feast—its terra cotta and bright colors, the conversation-piece furniture Ernest himself designed and became known for, and the ingenious fixtures such as a metal chandelier with butterfly design that typified Ernest's spontaneous way with the native as well as the Western and contemporary.

That night Ernest was upbeat about the forthcoming reopening of Kilib Sanctuary, his half-hectare land in Quezon, to showcase his landscape art, local cuisine and Balinese-style architecture. He did reopen it a week before his death—his last bash for friends who had made the long drive to Quezon.

Ernest also told us of future design projects, such as the old Pagsanjan hotel.

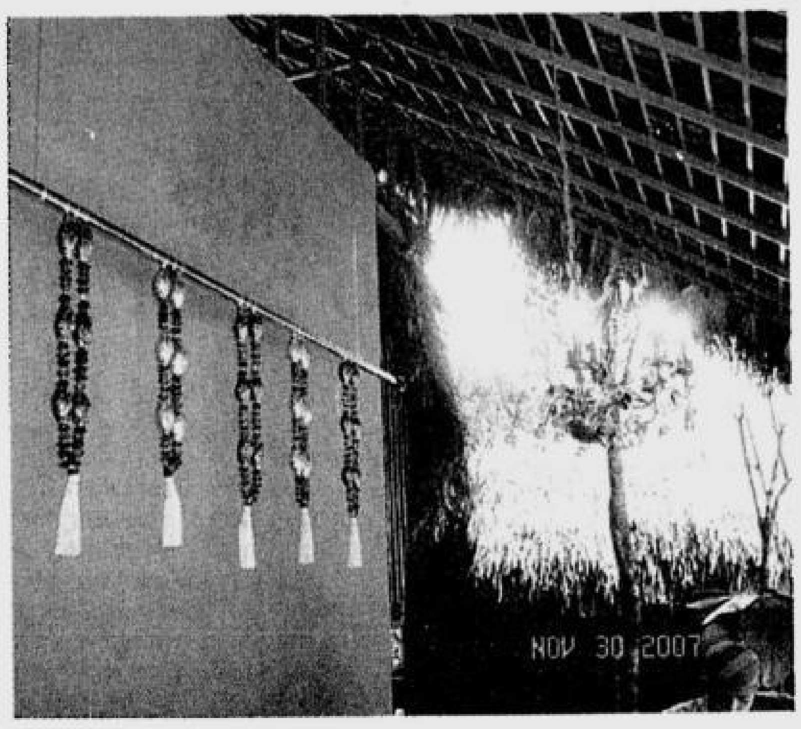
How old was he really, we asked, because he didn't seem to age. "Seventy-two!" he said unabashedly, stressing he now didn't feel the urge to hide it. "Just live life!" he said.

Master of reinvention

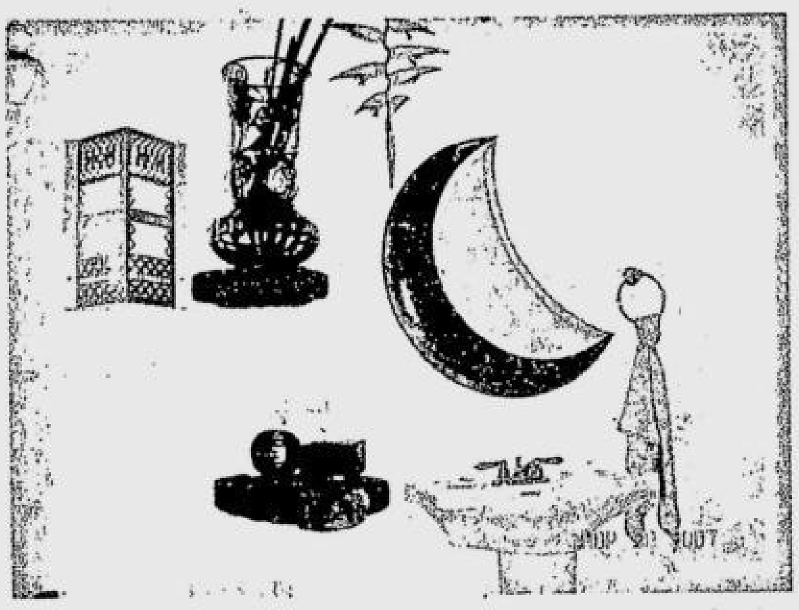
Ernest's life was a feast. Through the highs and lows, he reinvented himself. He had the gift of self-reinvention—a God-given grace for a man of humble beginnings.

That was why he never grew old, why he never surrendered to the shifting of time and fortune. That was why editors couldn't pin him down to a category—he was a fashion designer, a club man and restaurateur who dictated the city's night life, a furniture and home designer, a landscape artist, a jewelry designer.

Ernest's life wasn't a trend meant for a season. It was a feast for all time.



TOP and right: Ernest designed Kilib to showcase his eclectic and cutting-edge style.



RESTROOM decorated with Ernest's trademark ingenuity

He was a free spirit who created using whatever he found, be it the ordinary *sinamay* he turned into Imee Marcos' capelet, or *kamagong* wood sculpted into a showpiece coffee table.

At his Coco Banana from 1975 to the early '80s, he was the imperious don of café society who, as **Louie Ysmael** told us, stood guard at the door to dictate who come in and who stay out. With theatrical flourish (he was a theater hand in the '60s), he mounted lavish productions.

RTW designer **Tonichi Nocom** remembered going there as a student and looking in awe at the kiddie merry-go-round of horses installed at the bar.

People also remember the catfight between two avowed lesbians who ended up destroying Ernest's bar.

In 2000, he had a grand reentry in the theater as the "Aswang" in Gilda Cordero Fernando's milestone production at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Fashion vanguard

As he ruled the nightlife, he also experimented on the runway—avant-garde designs meant to shock, yet were wearable nonetheless.

Bobby Caballero, who helped arrange the Santuario wake, remembered directing Ernest's shows at Hyatt La Concha, notably his summer bikini collection which drew a standout crowd that included the justices of the Supreme Court who watched the show "en banc."

Ernest had a playful mind that was ahead of his time. I remember him doing black leather corset bustiers long before they were "in," or the "kagemusha" look with its exaggerated silhouette. He was a Montana, Lacroix, Versace even before these designers became giant brands.

Yet he also had his sedate and streamlined RTW—the cotton tunics and painter smocks, for instance.

After fashion, he designed home accessories, such as the rough-textured, gilt-frame mirror, and furniture sculpted out of heavy and odd-shaped wood.

He had no formal training for these disciplines. He didn't travel much. Where did he get his ability? Everywhere and nowhere. Ernest was an artist. He couldn't be contained by circumstances, no matter how lowly.

Two decades ago, our theater reviewer claimed he knew Santiago de Manila—Ernest's fashion designer-tag—well because Ernest was his family's beloved cook. I couldn't believe it until Ernest told me it was true.

Ernest had gone far in the world. He lived on the edge. He achieved much just by being a wild creative spirit. Now that spirit is truly free.

Denim fashion reinvented

THE KEY FOCUS OF THE FALL-holiday Collection of Levi's Red Tab is slim to loose fit and fabrics with surface textures, patterns and stripes. The finishing consists of pigment and over-dye, while the graphic logos are experimental, mixing the unorthodox with the experimental to create an appealing montage.

Knit fabrics on tops are mostly of loose construction and print stripes on subtle, light colors. Other shirt fabrics carry stripes and checks, such as the double-cloth check, flannel checks, worker stripes black and white, and baby cord,

Core sundries for the season highlight metal buttons, chipped painted buttons, Levi's rivets, pearl buttons and the Levi's Red Tab print label.

Embroidery on print, bold chain stitches, and contrast back-yoke fabric affirm a statement that it pays to give ear to the small things.

Having recently collaborated with graphic artist Schuurmans, the graphic theme for the season is a myriad of genres such as new-wave modernism embedded on multiple print techniques.

Likewise, the season's graphic theme is evocative of expressionist ideals because of its rendition on black and white, but its collaboration tees prove that there is, indeed, life in the Red Tab seasonal tees.

One of its key outfits, a collaboration tee, has colorful koi fish and rainbows in all its graphic glory on water and rubber print at the same time.

The season also introduces new colors like paprika and capers on long sleeved henleys.

GIRL'S Red Tab carousel pink graphic tee; Girl's Square Cut FL Core X jacket; BIC Core X ultra-skinny jeans

MEN'S Red Tab long-sleeve woven shirt with allover print in ivy green; Levi's Red Tab slim fit straight pants in dark denim shade

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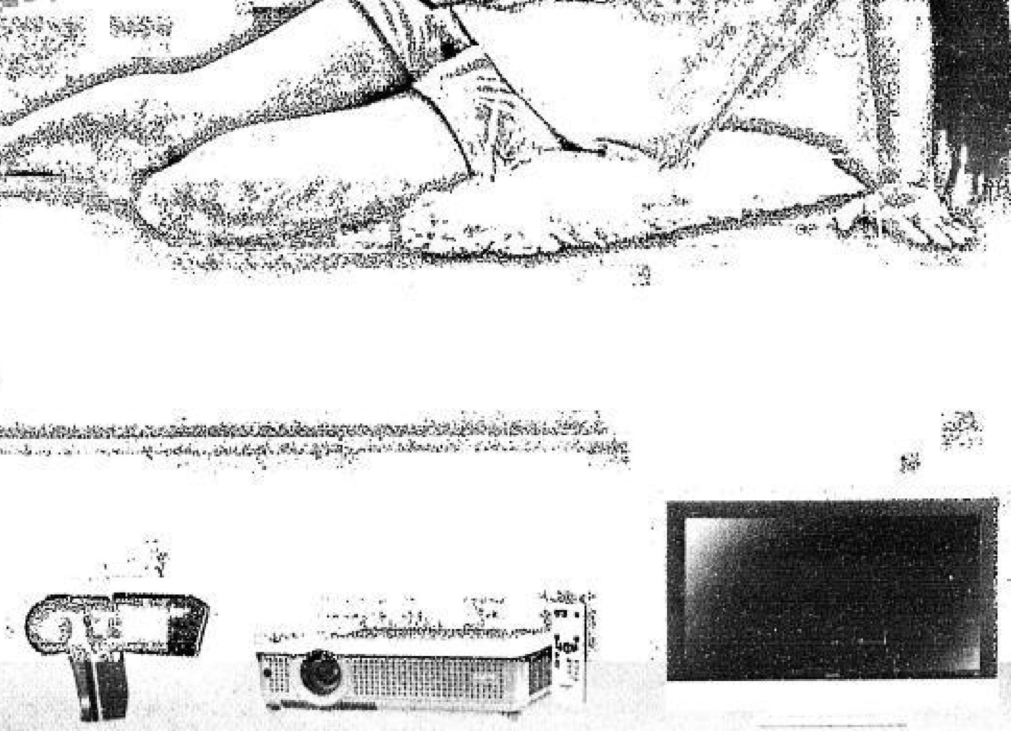
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RECITAL. Nutcracker: A Gift of Love, an annual recital of students of Rene Grace Rose Villa School of Ballet and Performing Arts, will be held at the Cinema 3 of SM Santa Rosa, Laguna, on Dec. 22 from 2-6 p.m. Proceeds of the show will benefit the elderly, abandoned children and cancer patients in San Pedro, Laguna. Call 8085189 or 0910-8644420.

LECTURE. Leading history professor Dr. Hugo Schwyzer will be in Manila to conduct a two-day lecture series on "Kabbalah and Christianity," Jan. 8-9 at The Loft, 39th Floor, Manansala in Rockwell Center, Makati City (0922-7681040 or e-mail Philippines@kabbalah.com, www.kabbalah.com/philippines).

PHOTO SHOW. Photoworld Asia 2008, the biggest and longest running photo show in Southeast Asia, will be held Jan. 31-Feb. 5 at the Glorietta, Ayala Center, Makati City (5247576/5280371).

SMART SUPPORTS PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
Rose Paragoso of Kaagapay Parish gets a special gift from Smart Communications, Inc. (Smart) during the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Day held at Don Bosco Makati Technical Institute. Paragoso won a Nokia 1600. This is the third consecutive year Smart is supporting the Archdiocese of Manila Office for Persons with Disabilities Ministry (AMO-PDM). The company conducted the whole-day celebration for disabled persons. In photo are, second from left, Fr. Alexander Thomas, AMO-PDM director and (fifth from left) Tina Garcia-Rodriguez, employee of Smart and Event's Program Committee head. It was a day of fun, games and surprises.

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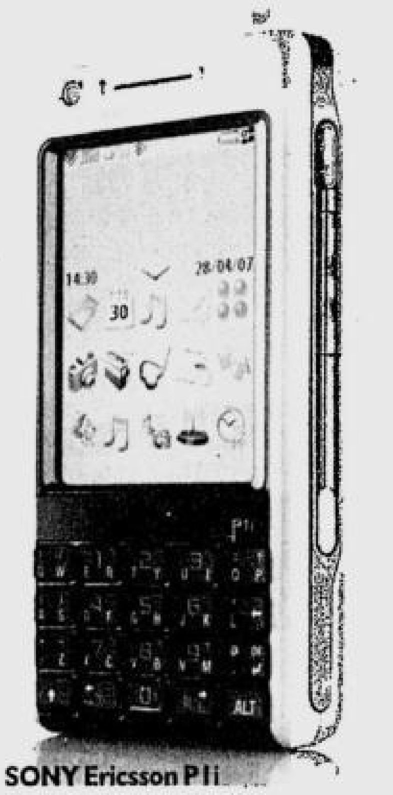
Elf Squad spreads Christmas cheer

SONY ERICSSON IS BRINGING in the Elf Squad to help shoppers get all the best choices for their mobile lifestyle this merry season. Check your shopping worries at the door as 12 Sony Ericsson concept shops manned by the Elf Squad are now open across the country.

Need gift ideas? Count on the Elf Squad to give you the best advice on what to put under the Christmas tree. A W910i Walkman phone perhaps for the moody teenager? The new SensMe feature will let him select songs based on tempo and music style so his playlist reflects his mood. Or how about a K850i Cybershot phone for your snapshot happy uncle? The 5-megapixel camera with Xenon flash, auto focus, image stabilizer, Photo fix and BestPic technology on this phone will have him coming up with your best Christmas photo album yet. The lady in your life will adore the fashionably designed Sony Ericsson T650i in Glowing Green or Midnight Blue. It's not all good looks for this slim 3G phone that comes with an elegant desk stand and pouch. She will also enjoy features like the 3.2-megapixel camera, Bluetooth stereo, photo blogging, video recording, high-speed web browsing and radio.

Sony Ericsson will also give out free calendar notebooks and a chance to win original Sony Ericsson Bluetooth headsets, car hands-free accessories and music speakers for every handset purchase. This offer is valid with the purchase of any of the following handsets: Sony Ericsson P1i, the W960i, W910i, W580i, W660i, W610i and W200i Walkman phones; the S500i, T650i, T250i, J110i, J120i, the K810i, K850i, K800i, K770i, K550i Cybershot phones, and the K530i and K320i phones.

On selected weekends during the Christmas season, the Elf Squad holds product demonstrations. Plus, watch out as the Elf Squad slashes down prices of selected handsets from Dec. 3 to Jan. 15, 2008. Head for any of the 12 Sony Ericsson concept shops nationwide and get free gift wrapping for your favorite Sony Ericsson mobile phones and accessories.



SONY Ericsson P1i

Fuss-free Christmas gift shopping

FOR FASHIONABLE gifts, try Penshoppe's Holiday gift sets. Choose from printed flip-flops, sling bags, pillows, body butters, shower gels, belts and tote bags in Oriental-inspired, jewel-toned wrappings. Super-soft tank tops and shorts are laced with sweet Oriental swirls, while funky boxers and bikinis are packed into whimsical Chinese takeout boxes.

With these gift sets, your Christmas shopping is fuss-free. You will also be surprised to see that you still have some money left to get something for yourself (www.penshoppe.com).

DR. DANIEL Vasquez, Francesco Patron, L'Opera's Balducci Abba Napa Ising Vasquez and Ermil Napa

Italian food lovers' haven marks 13th year

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

ONE OF THE BEST Italian restaurants in Cosmo Manille, L'Opera at The Fort, celebrated its 13th anniversary.

Throwing an elegant gala dinner for its loyal patrons were the resto's hotshot partners **Conrad Acedillo** and **Ermil Napa**.

The menu read like a royal Tuscan feast of excellently prepared courses deftly whipped up by Acedillo and Napa's partner, *dal maestro de cucina* **Moreno Mattei**, dahlings.

While the invitees breezed in fashionably on time, sparkling *proseccos* and *kir* royals were served to them. They also nibbled on the super-yummy antipasti.

The al-fresco doors were opened, extending the banquet seating. It set the stage for a grand Italian dining celebration, *palanggas*, starting with the freshest assortment of seafood *carpaccios* and *crudités*, freshly flown in Scampi, from Italy, rich oysters and an intensely exquisite Avruga caviar from Wild Herring, followed by the in-demand homemade ravioli.

The highlight, *palanggas*, was L'Opera's newly launched 2007/08 Menu. It included the to-die-for and lush *foie gras* in delicate truffle sauce. It also included Tuscany's finest meats—from baked milk-fed lamb to roasted rib-eye. There was also stuffed turkey, dahlings.

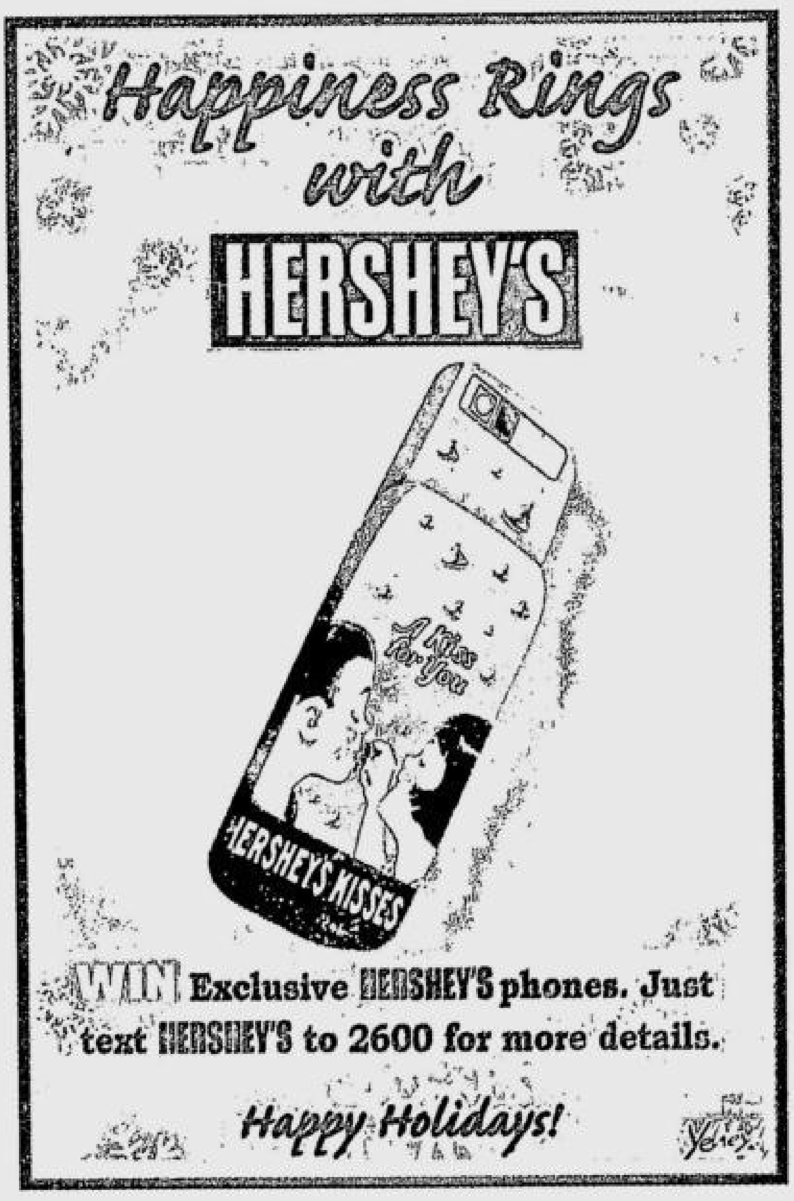
The big surprise was when chef Moreno introduced L'Opera Group's most talented dining staff that performed a concert. They ended their performance with the forever Italian favorite "Volare!"

Yes, *palanggas*! In L'Opera

ITALIAN FOOD/ H2

ROSSIE Harrigan, Imelda Marcos and Karina Galang

L'OPERA'S Conrad Acedillo and Charlie Rufino



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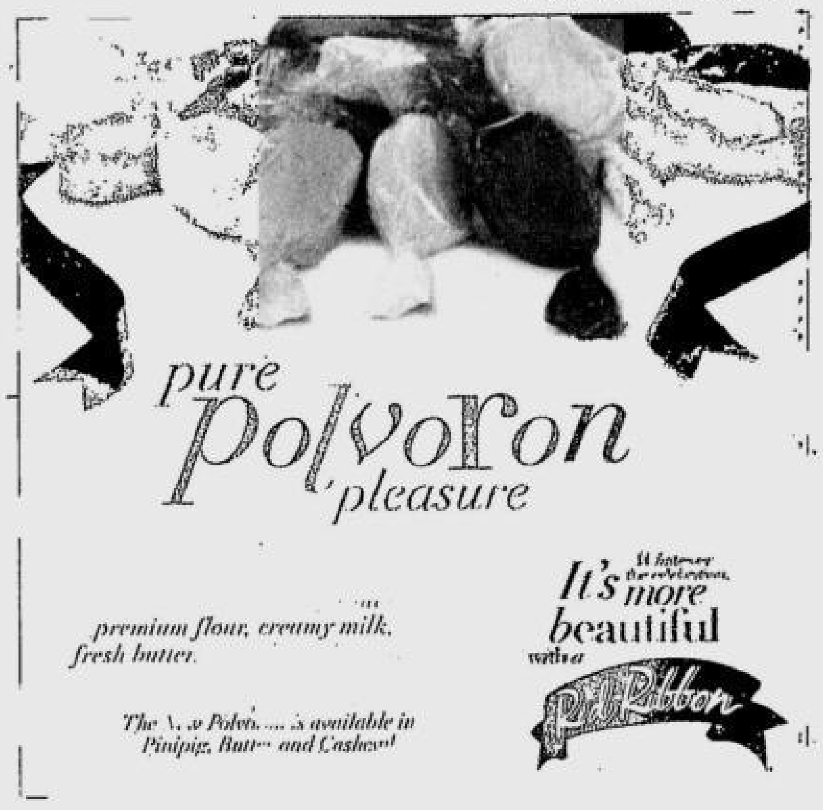

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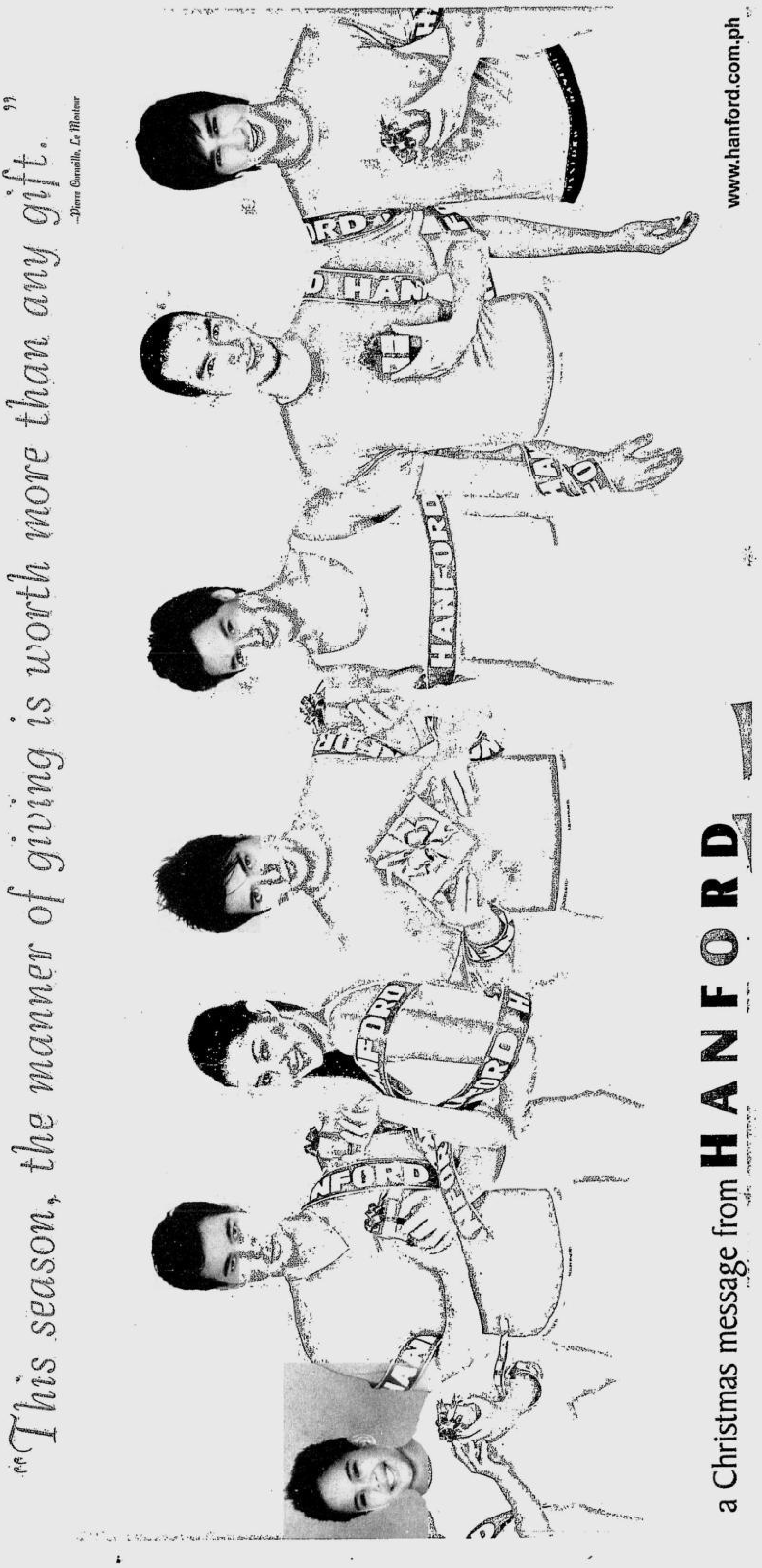

"This season, the manner of giving is worth more than any gift."
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Italian food lovers' haven marks

LUIS de Terry, JC de Terry and Helen de Terry

SONIA Mathay, Lulu Tinio and Jowee Reyes

TINA Vitas, Niccolo Baldelli and Joanna Abrera-del Prado

MARCO and Karis Napa

From page H1

you will not only find regional Tuscan cuisine at its very best. You also bask in the tradition of fine Italian dining.

Cheers, L'Opera! Here's to many more anniversaries to come!

Felice anniversario con noi!

Fashion show

"It was a night of glitz, glamour, and all that jazz," as the saying goes, *palanggas*. Two hundred invitees were treated to a spectacle of old-Hollywood glam on the runway as Freeway unleashed its Holiday Collection, by **Mel Orlina**, no less.

The fast-paced fashion show was a display of everything vintage, whimsical and avant garde, dahlings.

Embassy Superclub was transformed into a chic 1920s Paris club, with an illusionist welcoming the guests.

Brocade walls stood against the angular catwalk. Two embossed box doors beside the digital fireplace served as the entrance and exit in the runway. Eight models were transformed into beautiful 1920s glamour girls.

To cap off the extravaganza, Freeway endorser, gorgeous **Anne Curtis**, appeared from behind an intricate opening door, wearing an eye-catching white mini dress with elaborate ruffles perfect for the elegant night.

Orlina later took her well-deserved bow before the audience, dahlings.

But it didn't end there as the invitees were given fabulous loot bags. Everyone agreed Freeway did a remarkable fashion show. What a way to welcome this holiday season, *n'est ces pas*?

Sneakers gig

What is a royal experience? A world-renowned graffiti writer having a toast with a presidential grandson? Skaters slamming shooters in the open bar? And glamorous models posing with 250 amazingly designed skate decks in an awesome bash hosted by Royal Elastics?

Yes, that was what Royal Elastics dekArt 2007 was all about, *palanggas*. Royal Elastics had more than 250 skate decks on display at the Bubble Tent in Fort Bonifacio Global City.

Theme of the exhibit was Icons of the World. Displayed were images of legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix, "Super Size Me" star Ronald McDonald, Pope John Paul II and even Jesus Christ, would you believe?

The religious experience continued as **Stormie Mills**, top graffiti writer in Australia, worked on a mural that could make a graffiti believer even out of Metro Manila Development Authority Chair **Bayani Fernando**.

Using his signature monochromatic palate, this creative Perth native drew his interpretation of the "Trinity," which he said was inspired by his "observations on Filipinos' strong religious beliefs."

"For a graffiti writer, I don't really paint what you would consider happy pictures," said Stormie. "I want to capture and pay homage to people's struggles and the dignity within that."

After Stormie put his tag on his mural, dekArt and graffiti enthusiasts "bombed" (graffiti term for painted) the pristine white makeshift wall to their heart's content, with the music of **Nyco Maca, DJ Mulan** and **DJ Ali Nepomuceno** blasting in the background, *palanggas*.

"Combining equal parts of vintage-athletic cool and haute couture runway style, Royal Elastics changed the perception of how sneakers were worn by fusing athletics and leisure, two previously unassociated footwear categories," said **Brad Geiser**, hotshot director of creatives and strategics of GeiserMaclang Communications Inc.

"Now they're doing it again with skate decks and works of art."

Royal Elastics is a pioneer in the laceless sneakers industry. It's the shoe of choice for many street and graffiti artists like SheOne, 7th Letter Crew and Stormie Mills. It also has collaborations with the Beastie Boys for XLarge and Gwen Stefani for L.A.M.B. It is available at SM Mall of Asia and TriNoma. For more info, check out www.royalelastics.tv.

ERMIL Napa, Luigi Bernas and Ito Feliciano

JC DE TERRY, chef Moreno Mattei and Mari de Terry

FE NAPA

SGV'S Manny Reyes

DANIEL and Pauline Lao, Roselle Allado, eye-catchi

IVAN Co, designer Mel Orlina, Debbie Co, Tommy T and Dior Co

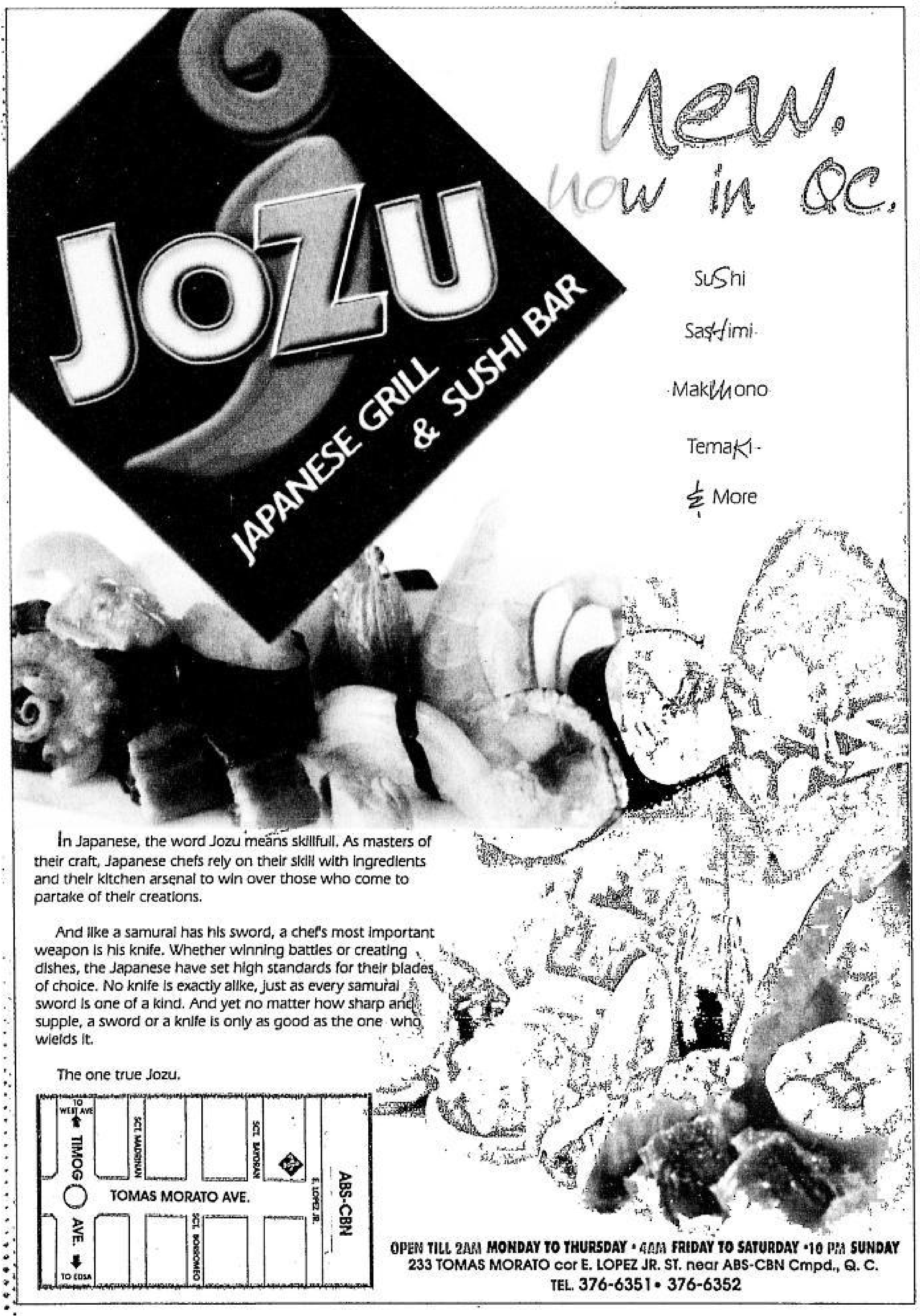
VERONIQUE del Rosario Corpus, Anne Curtis, gorgeo Precious Adona, Nikki Bacolod and good-looking PJ Va

KRISTINE Hermosa and Oyo Sotto

MELOT Abejo and Kate Torra

LIFESTYLE Magazine's Sari Y and Richard Tiu

KAT Cruz and Stephen Ku



In Japanese, the word Jozu means skillfull. As masters of their craft, Japanese chefs rely on their skill with ingredients and their kitchen arsenal to win over those who come to partake of their creations.

And like a samurai has his sword, a chef's most important weapon is his knife. Whether winning battles or creating dishes, the Japanese have set high standards for their blades of choice. No knife is exactly alike, just as every samurai sword is one of a kind. And yet no matter how sharp and supple, a sword or a knife is only as good as the one who wields it.

The one true Jozu.

OPEN TILL 2AM MONDAY TO THURSDAY • 4AM FRIDAY TO SATURDAY • 10 PM SUNDAY
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A MERRY HANFORD and A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

It is the merriest time of the year once again and Hanford shares and celebrate the Christmas spirit by offering a number of promotions for its loyal customers. Hanford products alone could be enough to have a merry and a comforting Christmas, but in addition, Hanford had prepared to give away special gift items fit for everyone who wants more than just comfort!

Another good news for customers who purchase Hanford items for a minimum amount of 500 pesos, can avail a limited edition Hanford Laptop Backpack for only 300 pesos. The Hanford Laptop Backpack is hip and cool and especially designed for the trendy and modern young professional, who is always on the go. This promo is available at selected SM Outlets from November and selected Robinson's Department Stores from December until supplies last.

Meanwhile, Robinson's Department Store outlets customers can Box It All Up as they purchase any regular priced Hanford item. These Hanford Boxes will be useful for the yuletide season, no more headaches in packing those gifts up!

Hanford wishes everyone a merry and comfortable Christmas!

A merry Christmas and a merry Hanford to everyone!!!!!

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13th year

g Katty Qua and Sheree Roxas-Chua Gotuaco

LACELESS sneakers aficionado Gerard Cancio, Jessamym Dy and Lilianna Manahan

2007
ROYAL
CRE

GLAM women Annie Maceda, Shirley Syliangco and Sandy Syliangco

GRAFFITI writer Stormie Mills (third from right), graffiti enthusiasts Steve Locke, Chris Brooks, K-Swiss president Gary Parsons, Queenie Tuadles and Gabriele Boschi, Rudy Project representative to the Philippines

eng

us
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lba

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The Best Discovery this Holiday Season:

The Gift of Effortless Slimming

There's no need to feel guilty about indulging. If after the holidays you suddenly discover that you've become one size too large, don't worry – that's something that Zunic Slimming and Body Sculpting can fix immediately. In fact, Zunic is known to show visible results in as little as 45 minutes.

"What we've done is to bring in the latest technology from overseas, and apply it to the problems associated with obesity and overeating," says Roxanne Sarthou, Managing Director of the state-of-the-art slimming centers known as Zunic. "We help people lose weight so that they can begin exercising if they want to, whether they wish to modify their eating habits or not."

Zunic's Slimming and Body Sculpting Method melts away unsightly body fat without surgery, diet, pills or exercise. Weight loss is conducted without the sweating, anxiety, and pain associated with traditional methods.

A client stretches out comfortably on a plush treatment couch, and fat is literally melted away using the latest technology such as light therapy, lasers, and radio frequency to non-invasively reach under the skin and dissolve stubborn fat deposits. The results are close to instantaneous. Visible results are evident in the course of a single treatment, and can be seen in as little as 45 minutes. Up to 24 hours after treatment, fat is excreted through normal body functions, with no side effects whatsoever.

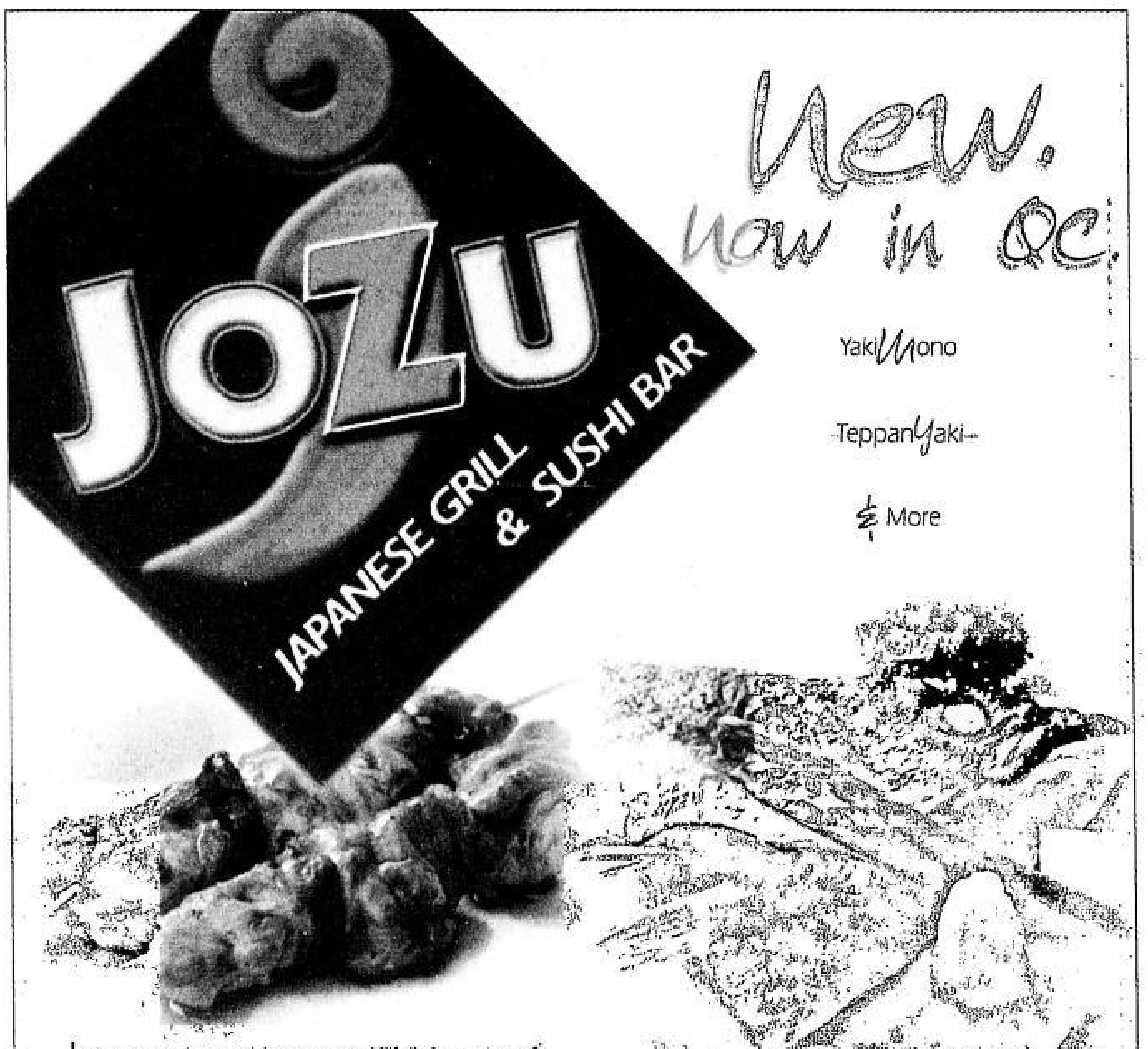
To give its clients the best possible care, Zunic maintains a full complement of trained personnel. Pre-treatment medical checks are performed by fully-trained Program Consultants side-by-side with licensed physicians, and all treatments are conducted by highly qualified medical staff.

Best of all, Zunic provides results with a minimum of time and effort. Zunic clients can waltz right out of their treatments and back into their lives without a pause!

Discover today what Zunic can do for you. What's more, in response to the growing demand of its unique slimming methodology, you better watch out for the opening of the latest Zunic branch in Alabang.

Come to Zunic in Makati Avenue or in Timog, QC for a FREE consultation and get the chance to win P50,000 worth of exclusive slimming and body sculpting treatments.

Body by
Zunic
slimming & body sculpting



new. now in QC.

YakiMono

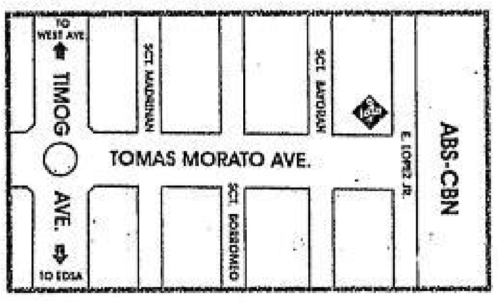
TeppanYaki

& More

In Japanese, the word Jozu means skillfull. As masters of their craft, Japanese chefs rely on their skill with ingredients and their kitchen arsenal to win over those who come to partake of their creations.

And like a samurai has his sword, a chef's most important weapon is his knife. Whether winning battles or creating dishes, the Japanese have set high standards for their blades of choice. No knife is exactly alike, just as every samurai sword is one of a kind. And yet no matter how sharp and supple, a sword or a knife is only as good as the one who wields it.

The one true Jozu.



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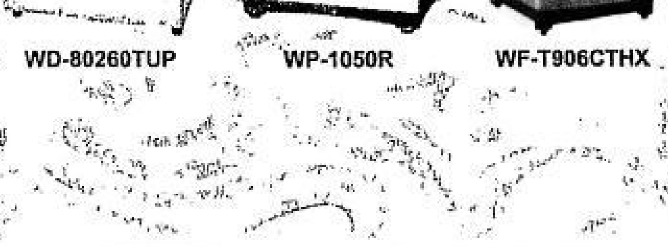

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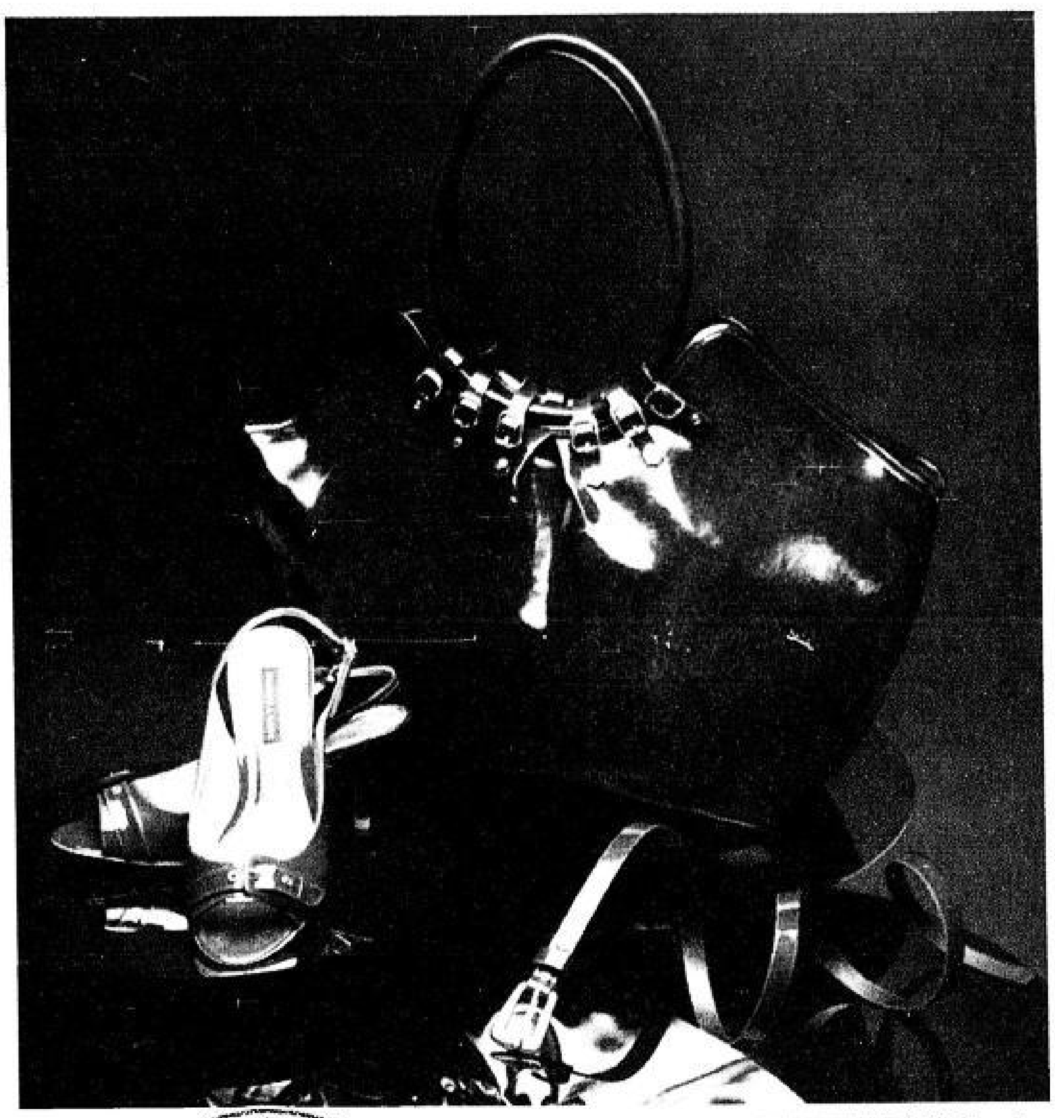
Shoes and accessories for her

REIGN OF SHINE. Women's fashion this season is all about shine.

CHARLES AND KEITH, THE LADIES' SHOES and accessories shop, has a Christmas offer. Any single receipt purchase worth P3,500 entitles the buyer to either a colorful cosmetics pouch, perfect for storing beauty fixes, or a shoe keychain.

The promo is on going until Dec. 31. Charles and Keith is at the Alabang Town Center, Ayala Cebu, Bonifacio High Street, Festival Mall, Robinsons Galleria, SM Cebu, SM Megamall and TriNoma.

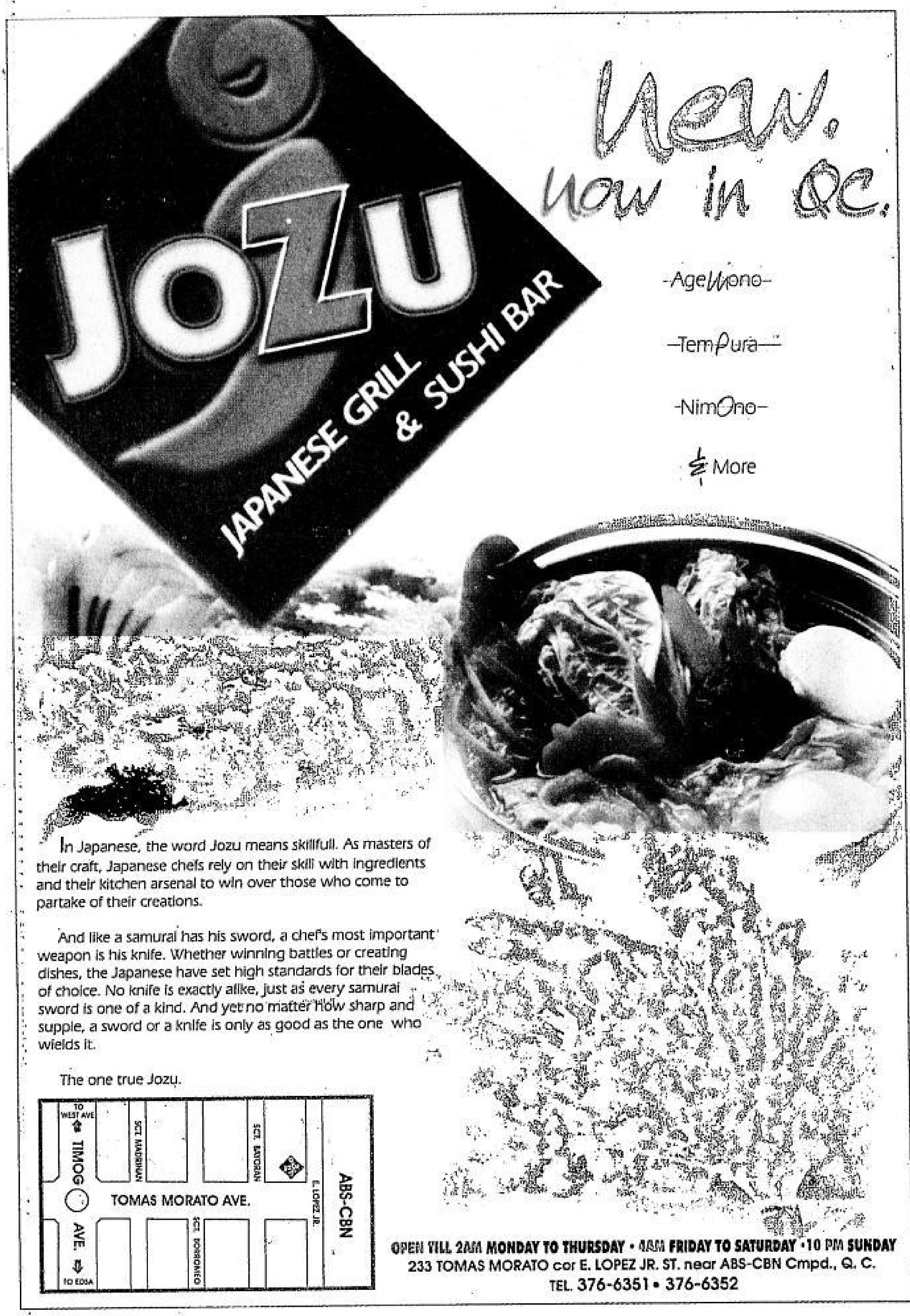


INTO THE BLUE. Royal blue patent leather peep toes and matching handbag from Charles & Keith

CHARLES and Keith promo entitles buyers to get this keychain for free.

GOLD RUSH. Add a new spin to your holiday dressing by adding a bit of gold.

ACCESORIZE. Classic black pumps and a cute little carry-all topped off with shades


New. now in QC.
-AgeMono-
-TemPura-
-NimOno-
& More

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And like a samurai has his sword, a chef's most important weapon is his knife. Whether winning battles or creating dishes, the Japanese have set high standards for their blades of choice. No knife is exactly alike, just as every samurai sword is one of a kind. And yet no matter how sharp and supple, a sword or a knife is only as good as the one who wields it.

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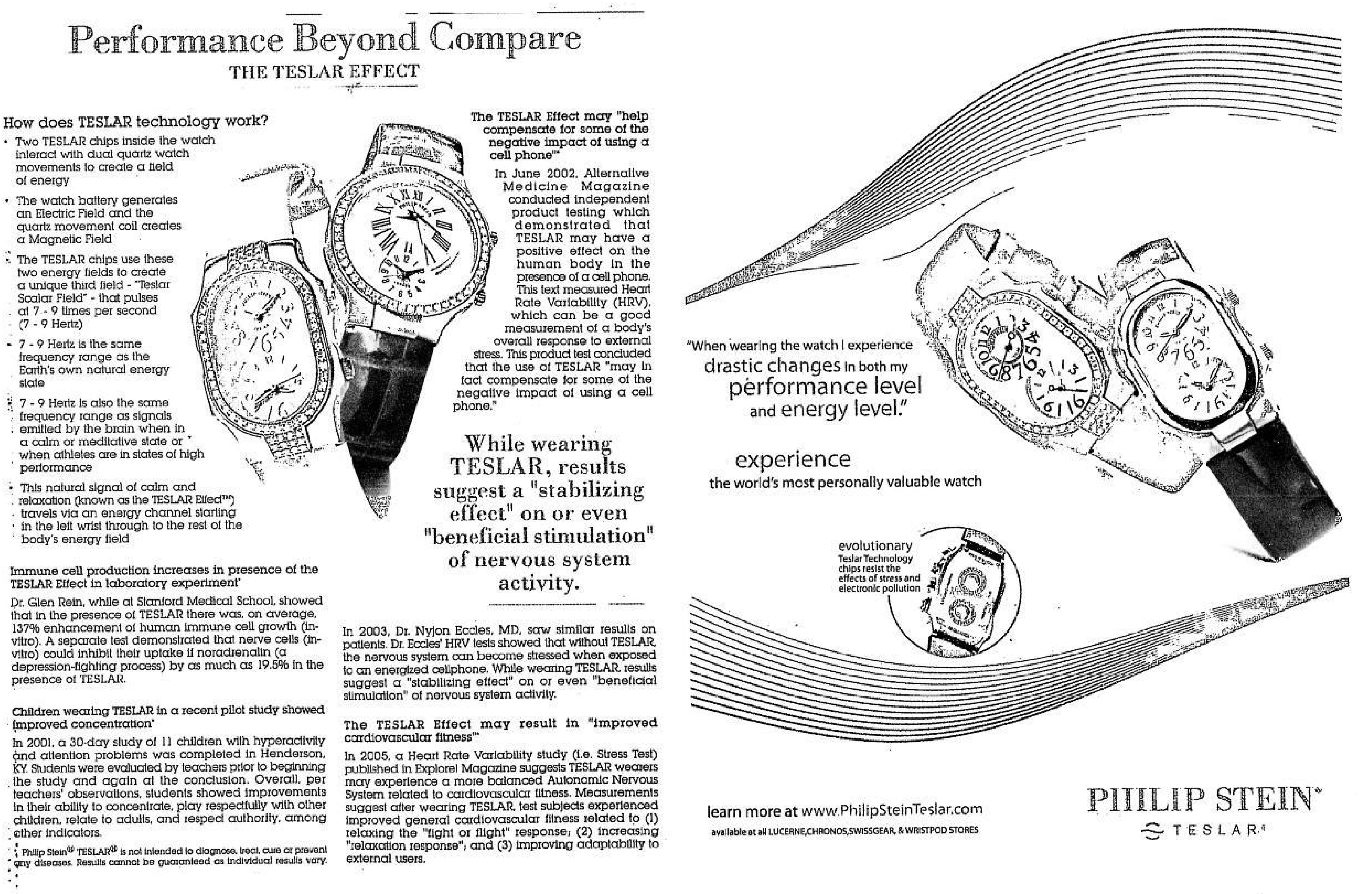
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- The TESLAR chips use these two energy fields to create a unique third field - "Teslar Scalar Field" - that pulses at 7 - 9 times per second (7 - 9 Hertz)
- 7 - 9 Hertz is the same frequency range as the Earth's own natural energy state
- 7 - 9 Hertz is also the same frequency range as signals emitted by the brain when in a calm or meditative state or when athletes are in states of high performance
- This natural signal of calm and relaxation (known as the TESLAR Effect™) travels via an energy channel starting in the left wrist through to the rest of the body's energy field

Immune cell production increases in presence of the TESLAR Effect in laboratory experiment*

Dr. Glen Rein, while at Stanford Medical School, showed that in the presence of TESLAR there was, on average, 137% enhancement of human immune cell growth (in-vitro). A separate test demonstrated that nerve cells (in-vitro) could inhibit their uptake if noradrenalin (a depression-fighting process) by as much as 19.5% in the presence of TESLAR.

Children wearing TESLAR in a recent pilot study showed improved concentration*

In 2001, a 30-day study of 11 children with hyperactivity and attention problems was completed in Henderson, KY. Students were evaluated by teachers prior to beginning the study and again at the conclusion. Overall, per teachers' observations, students showed improvements in their ability to concentrate, play respectfully with other children, relate to adults, and respect authority, among other indicators.

The TESLAR Effect may "help compensate for some of the negative impact of using a cell phone"*

In June 2002, Alternative Medicine Magazine conducted independent product testing which demonstrated that TESLAR may have a positive effect on the human body in the presence of a cell phone. This text measured Heart Rate Variability (HRV), which can be a good measurement of a body's overall response to external stress. This product test concluded that the use of TESLAR "may in fact compensate for some of the negative impact of using a cell phone."

While wearing TESLAR, results suggest a "stabilizing effect" on or even "beneficial stimulation" of nervous system activity.

In 2003, Dr. Nyjon Eccles, MD, saw similar results on patients. Dr. Eccles' HRV tests showed that without TESLAR, the nervous system can become stressed when exposed to an energized cellphone. While wearing TESLAR, results suggest a "stabilizing effect" on or even "beneficial stimulation" of nervous system activity.

The TESLAR Effect may result in "improved cardiovascular fitness"*

In 2005, a Heart Rate Variability study (i.e. Stress Test) published in Explore! Magazine suggests TESLAR wearers may experience a more balanced Autonomic Nervous System related to cardiovascular fitness. Measurements suggest after wearing TESLAR, test subjects experienced improved general cardiovascular fitness related to (1) relaxing the "fight or flight" response; (2) increasing "relaxation response"; and (3) improving adaptability to external users.

* Philip Stein® TESLAR® is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any diseases. Results cannot be guaranteed as individual results vary.

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New dimension in time-keeping

TREMILLA of Locman Italy

THE COMPANY THAT WAS first to place diamonds on aluminum, igniting the diamond-embellished sports-watch trend, Locman Italy, was founded by Marco Mantovani in 1986.

LOCMAN Italy

The Locman Group represents the most important enterprise of the Italian watch-making industry, with a leading company—Locman S.p.a. The Locman team of professionals work together in a life of friendship and style in Tuscany. They hold their office on the island of Elba, overlooking the bay of Campo.

The Locman Collections have displayed their renown on the wrists of famous celebrities such as Elton John, Oprah Winfrey, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Madonna, Michael Jordan, Brad Pitt, Elizabeth Taylor, Sharon Stone, Barbara Walters and Janet Jackson.

Locman timepieces have also been donned by sports icons such as David Beckham and Juventus head coach Fabio Capello.

In 2002, then Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi gifted Locman watches to the delegates of the Nato-Russia Summit in Rome.

With its elegant designs and modern features, Locman has introduced the world to a whole new dimension of time-keeping.

Locman is available at Rafael Jewellery, 2/L Edsa Shangri-La Plaza Mall (tel. 6363398); My Tempo UG, SM North Edsa (9277620); My Tempo, 2/F Robinson's Place Manila (5675209); My Diamond, 2/F Glorietta 4 (7571086); My Diamond UG, Gateway Mall (9124013). Visit www.locman.it or call 6873172.

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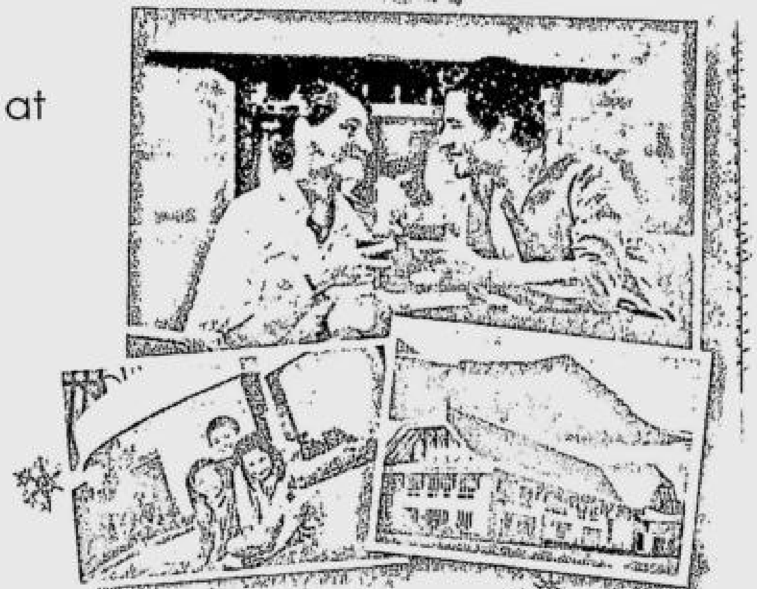

LBC
HARI NG PADALA!
LBC
TEAM LBC
LBC HARING PADALA

"All you want for Christmas, we deliver with Sun 24/7."

"With over 650 branches nationwide, LBC found a reliable, cost-efficient and convenient communications partner in Sun."
Chris Guidotti, VP Procurement

LBC –"Ang Hari ng Padala", gets even busier this Christmas season to make sure higher volumes of deliveries are made on time, all the time. With over 650 branches nationwide, and offices in Asia, the US and Canada, LBC gets ready to meet the Pinoy holiday rush with its fast-moving and cut-rate delivery service—with a lot of help coming from its communications partner, Sun Cellular.

"Sun provides reliable and on-spot communication service that is essential to our operations, while helping us keep our costs significantly down," says Chris. It is so cost effective that LBC has connected all its branches with Sun's 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited service. As a result, coordination between the head office and the branches is so much faster and clearer especially since calls can be made to all branches without them worrying about the costs.

LBC and Sun are definitely in touch with Filipinos everywhere because Sun delivers communications fit for a king. That's why "basta LBC, makakarating!"

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Every year, Sun plows in P11 billion to increase coverage and capacity, for more calls and texts anytime, anywhere.

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Wise men shop here
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER
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Searching for that perfect gift for that special someone? Take a ride to GSC where everything from jewelry to furniture to unique home decors are at bargain prices! Great holiday finds are endless in over 2000 stalls sa Greenhills Christmas Bangketa Fair at pwede pang mag shop 'til sawa sa Greenhills Night Market! This Christmas, all roads lead to Greenhills Shopping Center.

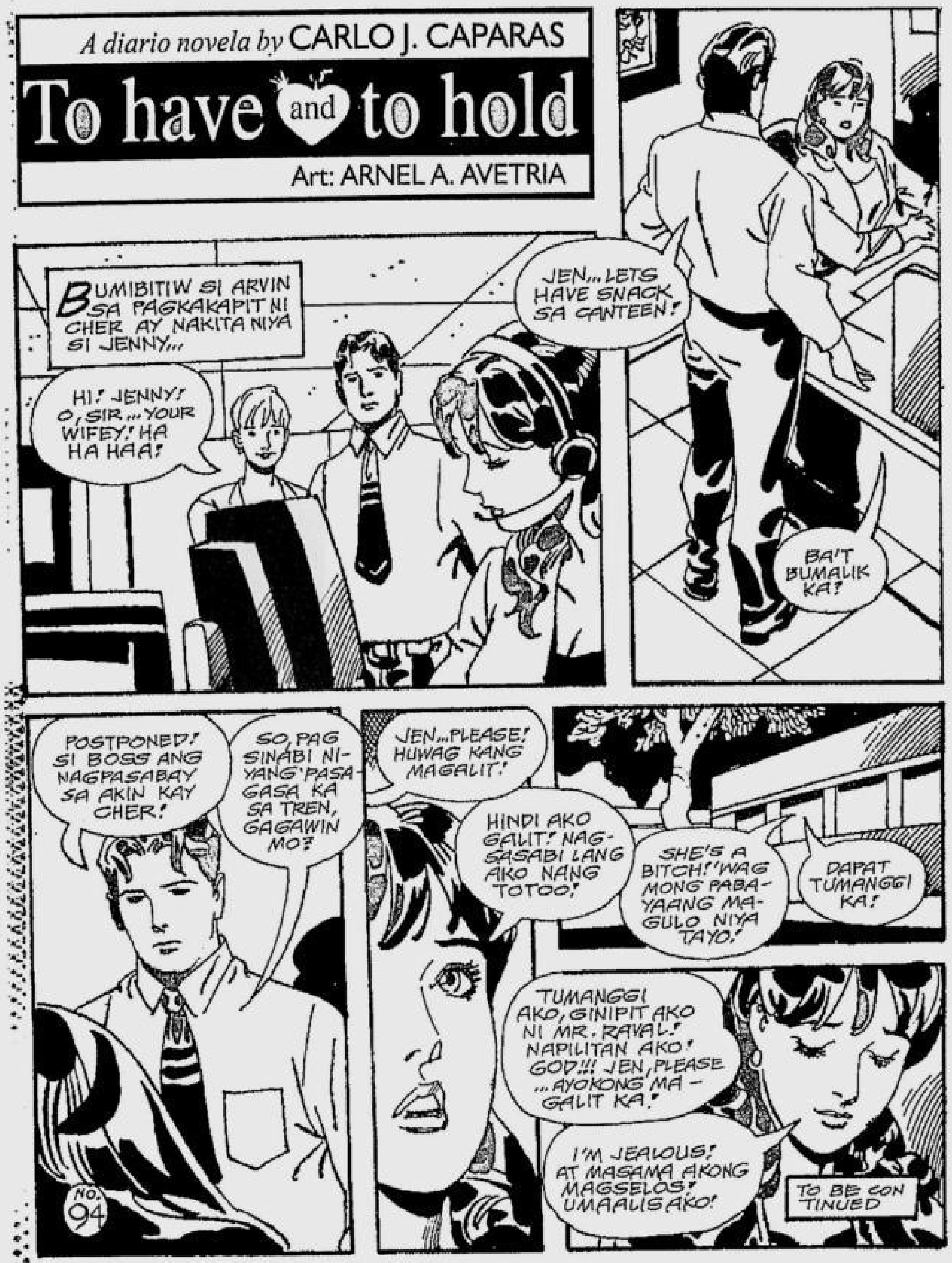
BPI VISA MasterCard credit cards now accepted at all tiangge stalls.

only until January 06, 2008

A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

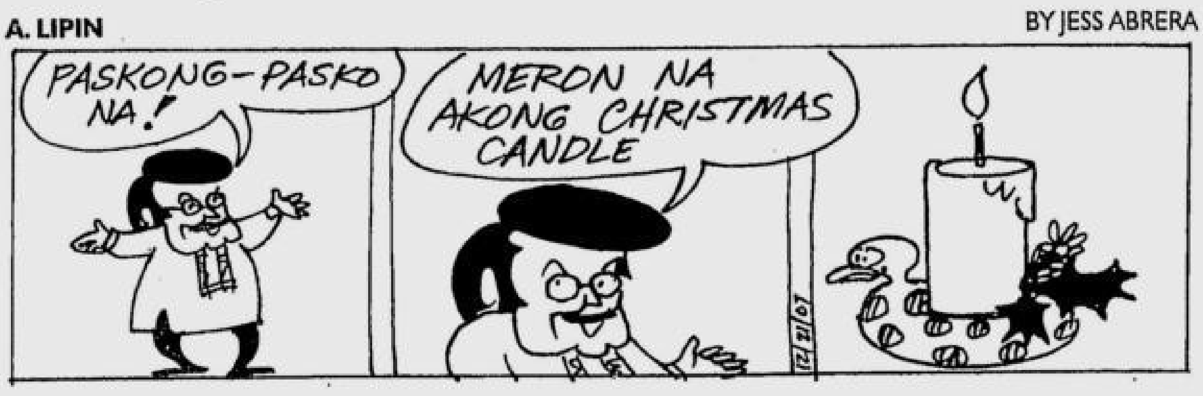
To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA


BUMIBITIW SI ARVIN SA PAGKAKAPIT NI CHER AY NAKITA NIYA SI JENNY...
HI! JENNY! O, SIR... YOUR WIFEY! HA HA HAA!
JEN... LETS HAVE SNACK SA CANTEEN!
BA'T BUMALIK KA?
POSTPONED! SI BOSS ANG NAGPASABAY SA AKIN KAY CHER!
SO, PAG SINABI NIYANG 'PASAGASA KA SA TREN', GAGAWIN MO?
JEN... PLEASE! HUWAG KANG MAGALIT!
HINDI AKO GALIT! NAGSASABI LANG AKO NANG TOTOO!
SHE'S A BITCH! 'WAG MONG PABAYAANG MAGULO NIYA TAYO!
DAPAT TUMANGGI KA!
TUMANGGI AKO, GINIPIT AKO NI MR. RAVAL! NAPILITAN AKO! GOD!!! JEN, PLEASE ...AYOKONG MAGALIT KA!
I'M JEALOUS! AT MASAMA AKONG MAGSELOS! UMAALIS AKO!
TO BE CONTINUED
NO. 94

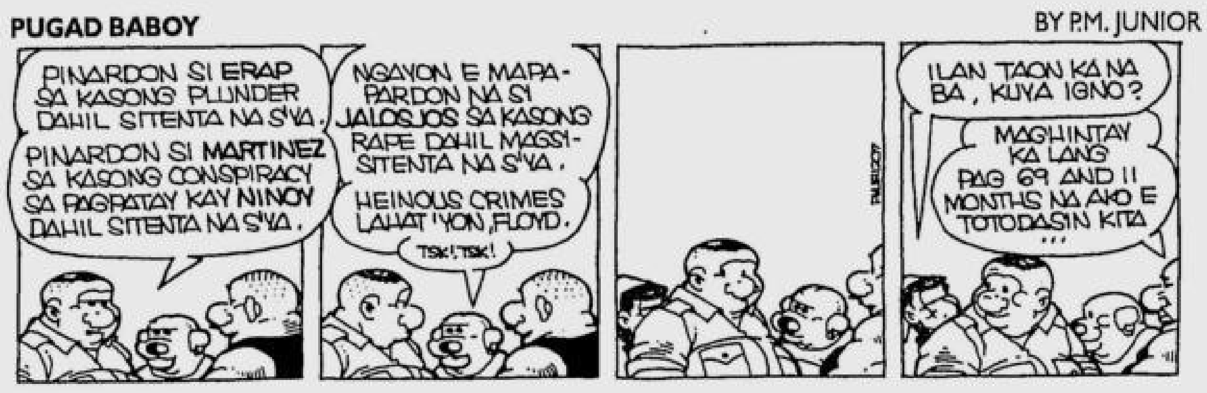
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PASKONG-PASKO NA!
MERON NA AKONG CHRISTMAS CANDLE
12/21/07

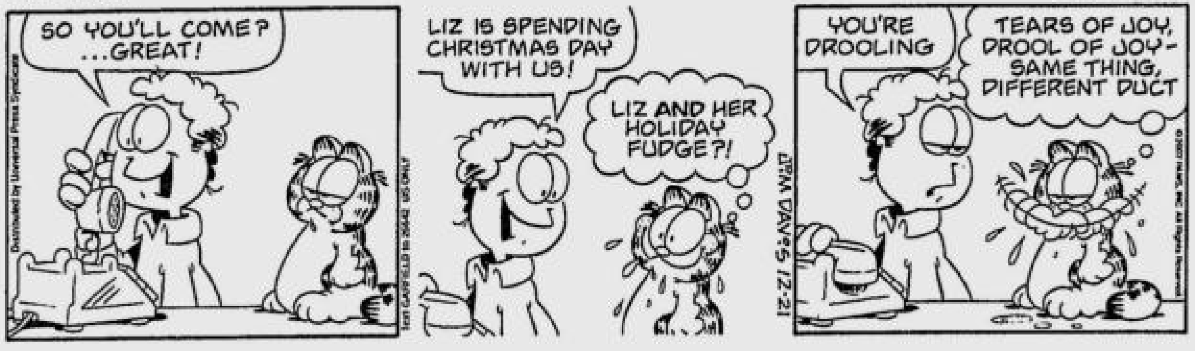
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PINARDON SI ERAP SA KASONG PLUNDER DAHIL SITENTA NA S'YA.
PINARDON SI MARTINEZ SA KASONG CONSPIRACY SA PAGPATAY KAY NINOY DAHIL SITENTA NA S'YA.
NGAYON E MAPAPARDON NA SI JALOSJOS SA KASONG RAPE DAHIL MAGSISITENTA NA S'YA.
HEINOUS CRIMES LAHAT 'YON, FLOYD.
TSK! TSK!
ILAN TAON KA NA BA, KUYA IGNO?
MAGHINTAY KA LANG PAG 69 AND 11 MONTHS NA AKO E TOTODASIN KITA ...

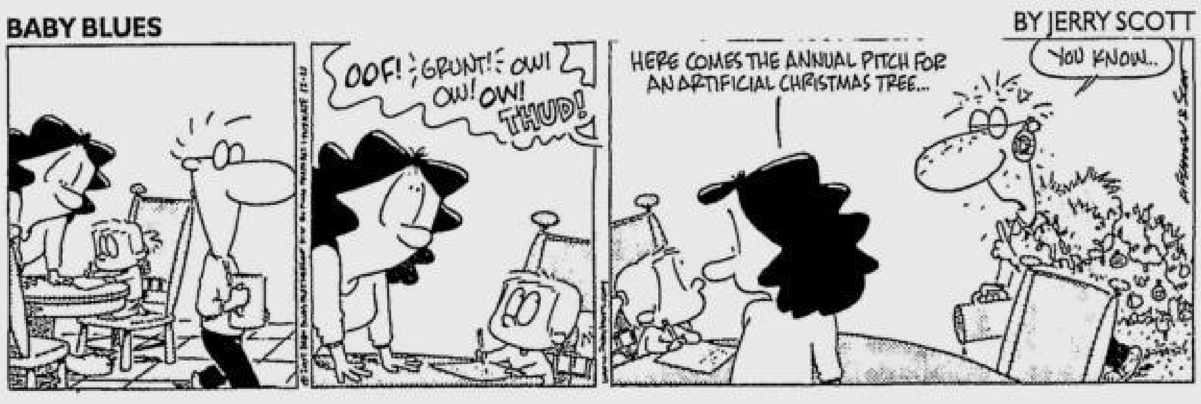
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


SO YOU'LL COME? ...GREAT!
LIZ IS SPENDING CHRISTMAS DAY WITH US!
LIZ AND HER HOLIDAY FUDGE?!
YOU'RE DROOLING
TEARS OF JOY, DROOL OF JOY - SAME THING, DIFFERENT DUCT
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate
JIM DAVIS 12-21

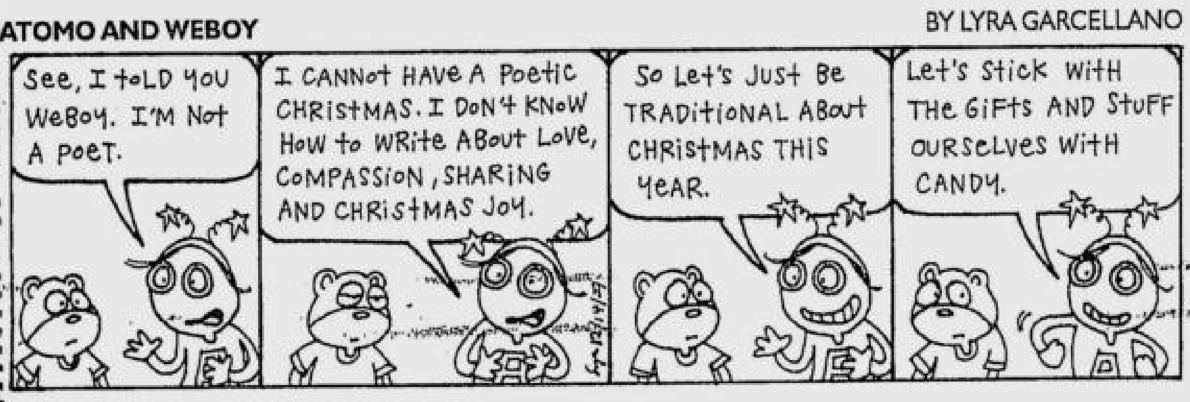
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


OOF! GRUNT! OW! OW! OW! THUD!
HERE COMES THE ANNUAL PITCH FOR AN ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREE...
YOU KNOW..

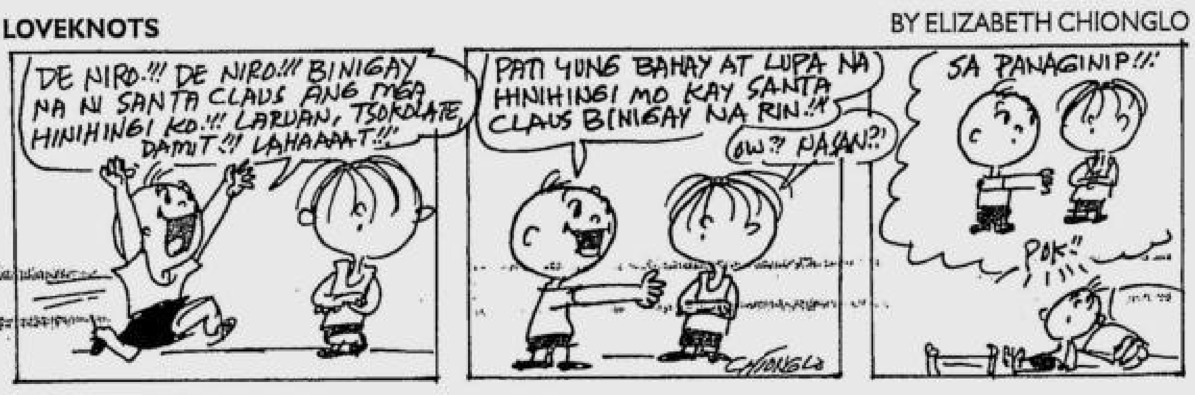
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


See, I toLD you WeBoy. I'M Not A PoeT.
I CANNot HAVE A Poetic CHRISTMAS. I DoN't KNoW How to WRite ABout Love, COMPASSION, SHARING AND CHRISTMAS Joy.
So Let's Just Be TRADITIONAL About CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR.
Let's Stick With The Gifts AND Stuff ourSelves With CANDY.

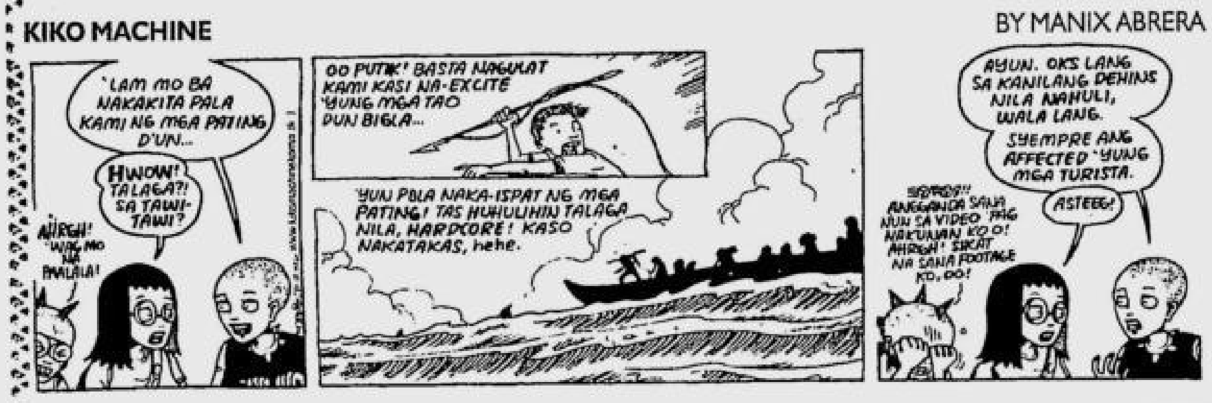
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DE NIRO!!! DE NIRO!!! BINIGAY NA NI SANTA CLAUS ANG MGA HINIHINGI KO!!! LARUAN, TSOKOLATE, DAMIT!!! LAHAAAAT!!!
PATI YUNG BAHAY AT LUPA NA HINIHINGI MO KAY SANTA CLAUS BINIGAY NA RIN!!
OW?! NASAN?!
SA PANAGINIP!!!
POK!
CHIONGLO

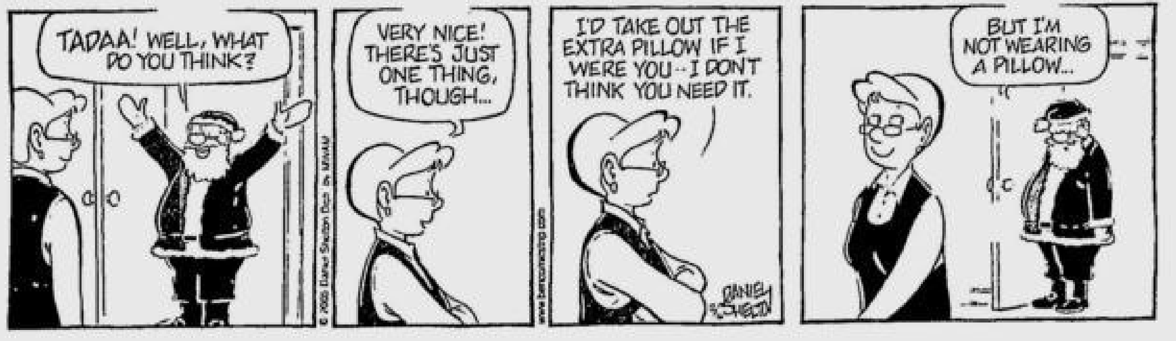
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


'LAM MO BA NAKAKITA PALA KAMI NG MGA PATING D'UN...
HWOW! TALAGA?! SA TAWI-TAWI?
AIRGH! 'WAG MO NA PAALALA!
OO PUTIK! BASTA NAGULAT KAMI KASI NA-EXCITE 'YUNG MGA TAO DUN BIGLA...
'YUN PALA NAKA-ISPAT NG MGA PATING! TAS HUHULIHIN TALAGA NILA, HARDCORE! KASO NAKATAKAS, hehe.
AYUN. OKS LANG SA KANILANG DEHINS NILA NAHULI, WALA LANG.
SYEMPRE ANG AFFECTED 'YUNG MGA TURISTA.
ASTEEG!
SAYANG!! ANGGANDA SANA NUN SA VIDEO 'PAG NAKUHANAN KO O! AHRGH! SIKAT NA SANA FOOTAGE KO, OO!

BEN

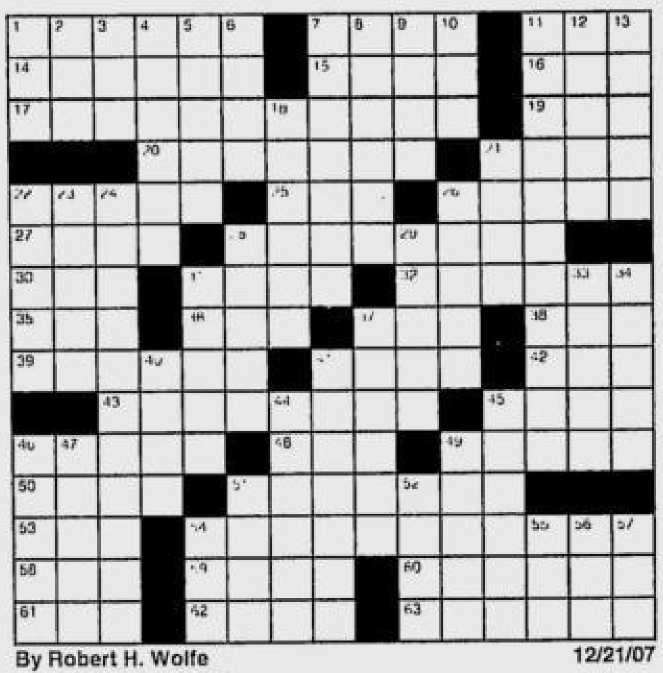
BY DANIEL SHELTON


TADAA! WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
VERY NICE! THERE'S JUST ONE THING, THOUGH...
I'D TAKE OUT THE EXTRA PILLOW IF I WERE YOU -- I DON'T THINK YOU NEED IT.
BUT I'M NOT WEARING A PILLOW...
DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Black Sea port
7 Gratis
11 Korean car make
14 Direct sales
15 Dynamic leader?
16 CBS rival
17 Recognized retailers?
19 Neighbor of Syr.
20 Vends anew
21 "The African Queen" screenwriter
22 Lap dogs, for short
25 Scot's negative
26 Glenn and Lennon
27 "Atlas Shrugged" author
28 Disloyal person
30 Late starter?
31 Wharf
32 Remains stationary, asea
35 Ran into
36 Ship letters
37 Wire measure
38 Singing syllable
39 Earth, for one
41 Rivers of Spain
42 Island near Naxos
43 Most inferior
45 606
46 Singer Frankie
48 __ "King" Cole
49 Kin of cods
50 Pay to play
51 Finger pointer
53 Cavity
54 Selecting sweaters?
58 Emigrant's subj.
59 Centerward
60 Kind of monkey
61 Peggy or Pinky
62 Bucks, perhaps
63 Williams of tennis

DOWN
1 Mork's planet
2 Cave dwelling
3 Summer at the Sorbonne
4 Seethed
5 Facets
6 Some beers
7 Mistaken belief
8 One who staggers
9 Goofs
10 Goddess of the Dawn
11 Lance?
12 "Hedda Gabler" playwright
13 Land units
18 Trojan hero of Virgil's epic
21 Top of the line
22 Groom oneself
23 Stand for art
24 Tie somewhat?
26 Holding cells
28 Oxidizes
29 Prufrock's creator
31 Waiting line
33 Treasure quantity
34 Mirage image
37 Get teary
40 Nary a one
41 Chernobyl, e.g.
44 Stir to action
45 More gloomy
46 Boutonniere site
47 Flavoring seed
49 "Wag the Dog" co-star
51 First name of 49D
52 Gentlemen
54 Josh
55 Expert conclusion?
56 Church sister
57 Young women's grp.


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63

By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

12/21/07

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

C	A	R	A	■	G	I	N	S	■	R	A	L	E	S
O	D	E	S	■	E	R	I	E	■	E	M	I	R	S
M	D	C	C	■	N	A	N	A	■	S	A	V	E	S
I	T	T	A	K	E	S	A	L	L	T	H	E	■	■
C	O	O	P	E	R	■	■	S	Y	R	■	R	N	A
■	■	■	■	G	I	G	I	■	R	A	S	P	E	R
T	H	A	M	■	C	O	N	C	E	I	T	O	U	T
B	E	F	O	G	■	O	U	R	■	N	A	O	M	I
O	F	T	H	E	O	N	I	O	N	■	G	L	E	E
N	E	E	S	O	N	■	T	W	A	Y	■	■	■	■
E	R	R	■	D	A	D	■	■	S	A	L	S	A	S
■	■	W	H	E	N	Y	O	U	C	O	O	K	I	T
D	H	A	Y	S	■	E	L	S	E	■	V	I	S	E
V	E	R	D	I	■	R	I	E	N	■	E	L	L	A
D	O	D	E	C	■	S	O	R	T	■	S	L	E	D

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12/21/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very physical in your approach to life. You're dramatic. You see things in black-and-white terms. In particular, you have a great sense of timing, especially when using silence. You're very private; and others are quick to sense this. When you choose to be so, you're disarmingly charming. In the year ahead, you will study or learn something important.

Birthdate of: Kiefer Sutherland, actor; Samuel L. Jackson, actor; Ray Romano, comedian.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): For the next six weeks, bosses, parents and authority figures will notice you more than usual. You can count on this. (Fear not—they're impressed.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Try to do something that's a break from your daily routine during the next few weeks. You need adventure!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): In the month ahead, you'll feel more intensely and passionately about practically everything in life. Don't worry about this. It's just something happening in the stars.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Today the Sun moves opposite your sign for the next four weeks. You might be bringing something to a satisfying closure. However, be careful, because someone could oppose you.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Because you have a strong desire to get better organized in the next few weeks, get down to it! Buy shelving, file folders, cleaning equipment, paint—whatever it takes to do a good job.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're starting to feel playful and flirtatious. In fact, in the next few weeks, your main goal is simply to have fun. Slip away on a vacation if you can.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Discussions with parents and family members are important in the next few weeks. In fact, home and domestic matters will be your primary focus. Entertaining at home will please you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): The tempo of your days is starting to accelerate. Expect to be busy in the next few weeks with short trips, buying and selling, increased reading, writing and studying, plus time spent with siblings.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're full of bright, money-making ideas now. Some of these ideas could definitely pay off in the next few weeks.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Today the Sun enters your sign, recharging your batteries for the rest of the year. In addition, you easily will attract opportunities and people to you now and for the next four weeks.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Try to find time for some quiet thinking in the next month. This is the best time all year for you to think about how you want your year to unfold.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your popularity rating is rising. Accept all invitations. Enjoy the company of others. Talk to people about your long-term plans and goals for the future.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu By Dave Green

			6				8	
3						7		
	1		9		5			
		4		2		6		3
6		7		3		4		
			1		8		7	
		3						6
	8				9			

Difficulty Level ★★★★

12/21

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	3	8	1	9	4	7	6	5
5	9	6	7	3	8	2	4	1
1	4	7	2	6	5	9	8	3
6	2	4	3	5	9	1	7	8
7	8	3	6	4	1	5	9	2
9	1	5	8	2	7	6	3	4
4	5	1	9	7	3	8	2	6
3	6	9	5	8	2	4	1	7
8	7	2	4	1	6	3	5	9

Difficulty Level ★★★

12/20

Beyond the basics

CHOCOLATE brown and black lurex sweater, rust cable knit sweater, fur trimmed/detachable jacket, skinny fit denim

TAKE DECEMBER WEAR to new heights, with the new fall-winter collection from Giordano, made from organic materials designed to evoke rustic charm and bring one back to the days of durable and weathered fashion.

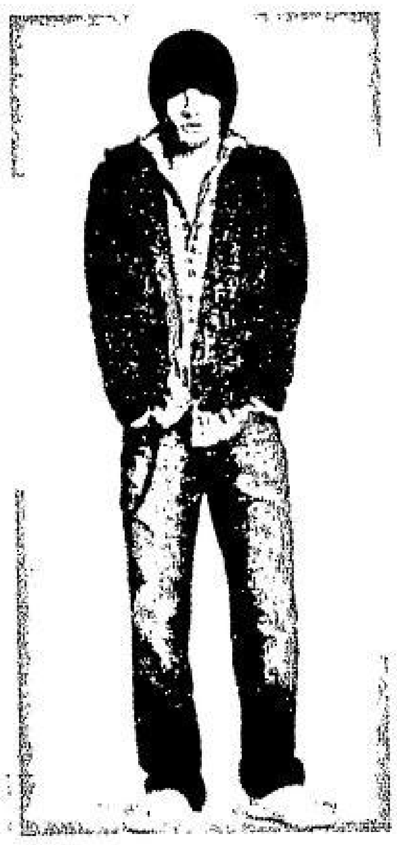
The new collection was launched via a fashion show at the Music Hall of the sprawling SM Mall of Asia recently. Titled Beyond Basic, the fashion show was directed by Audie Espino of Runway Productions.

The new collection is now available at all Giordano stores in a wide variety of colors, from the blacks, grays, and whites that have come to characterize the classic color palette of Giordano to the new selection of rustic colors for 2007 fall-winter. These homey colors include amphora, which infuses the collection with several refreshing shades of green; bistre, which enhances the classic Giordano hues with subtle hints of earthy brown; and rust, which flushes with hints of deep brownish red.

Expect cozier, warmer winter days as well, as Giordano highlights the finest quality cotton that goes into the production of its shirts and polos and the rough organic fibers that characterize its pants and jackets.

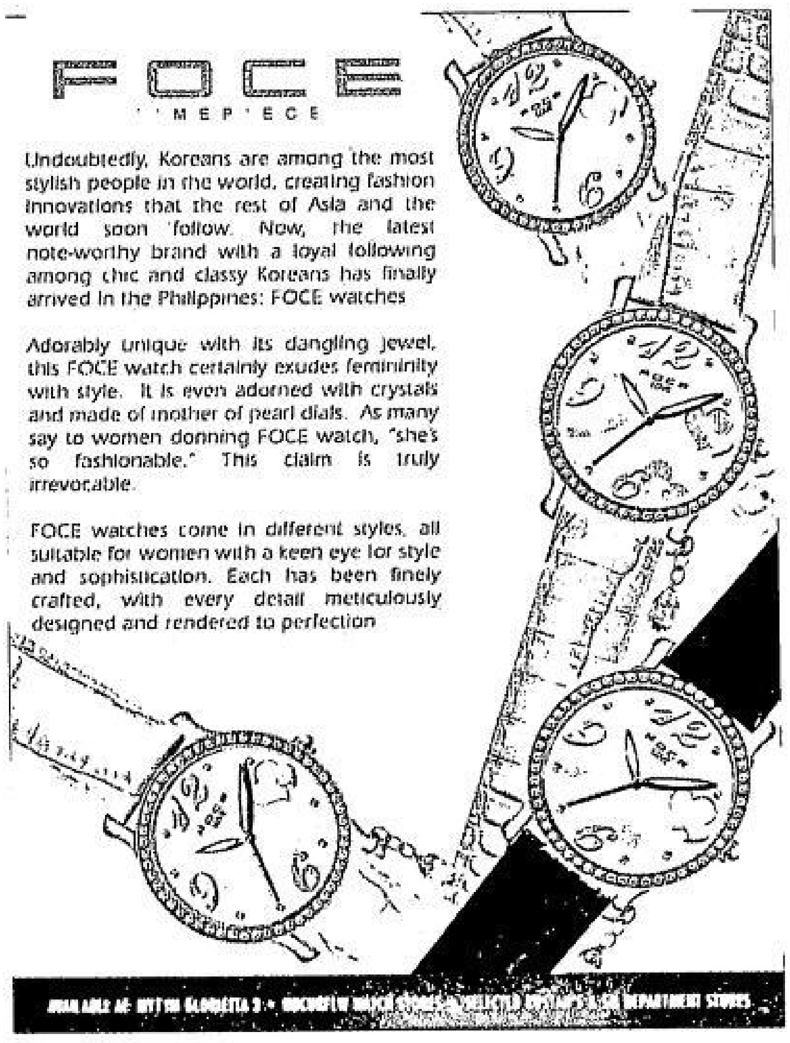
GREY cotton ribbed tank,black cropped sweater with satin bow, bootcut denim

STRIPE long sleeves stretch tee, black peacoat, dark wash skinny denim



PLAID crinkled shirt, chocolate hooded jacket with fur lining, straight fit denim jeans

BROWN turtle neck sweater, chocolate corduroy blazer, men's cargo pants



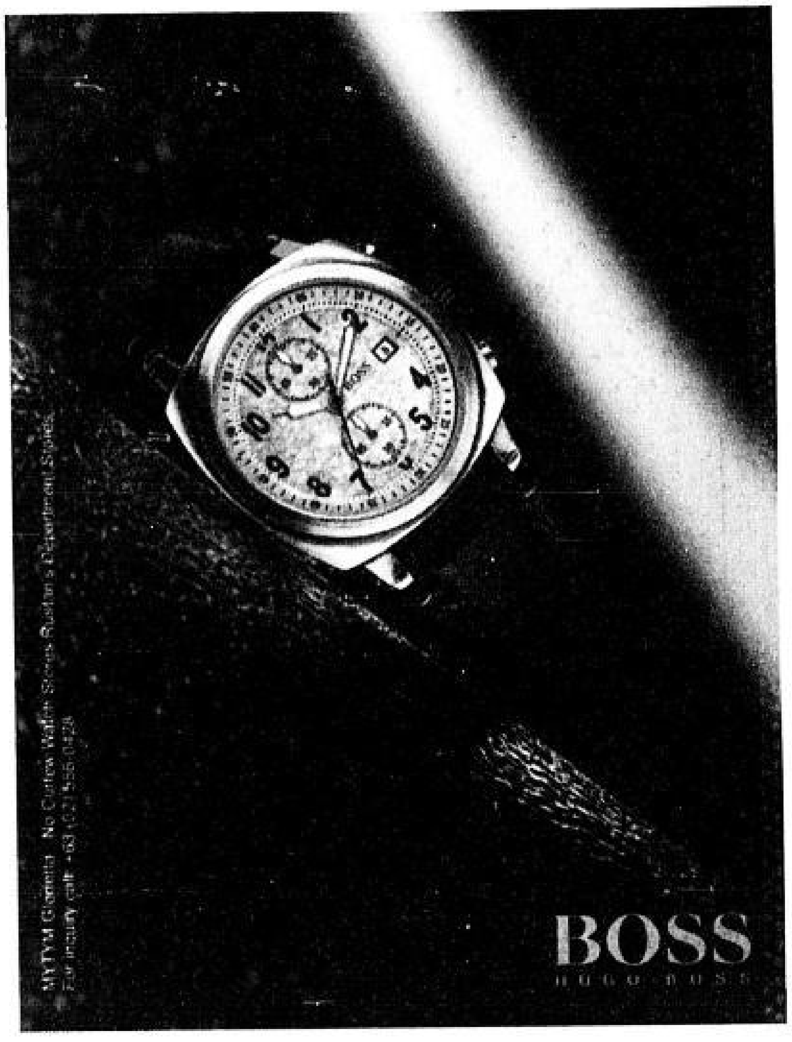
FOCE
TIMEPIECE

Undoubtedly, Koreans are among the most stylish people in the world, creating fashion innovations that the rest of Asia and the world soon follow. Now, the latest note-worthy brand with a loyal following among chic and classy Koreans has finally arrived in the Philippines: FOCE watches

Adorably unique with its dangling jewel, this FOCE watch certainly exudes femininity with style. It is even adorned with crystals and made of mother of pearl dials. As many say to women donning FOCE watch, "she's so fashionable." This claim is truly irrevocable.

FOCE watches come in different styles, all suitable for women with a keen eye for style and sophistication. Each has been finely crafted, with every detail meticulously designed and rendered to perfection

AVAILABLE AT: MYTYM GLORIETTA 2 • [illegible] WATCH STORES • SELECTED [illegible] DEPARTMENT STORES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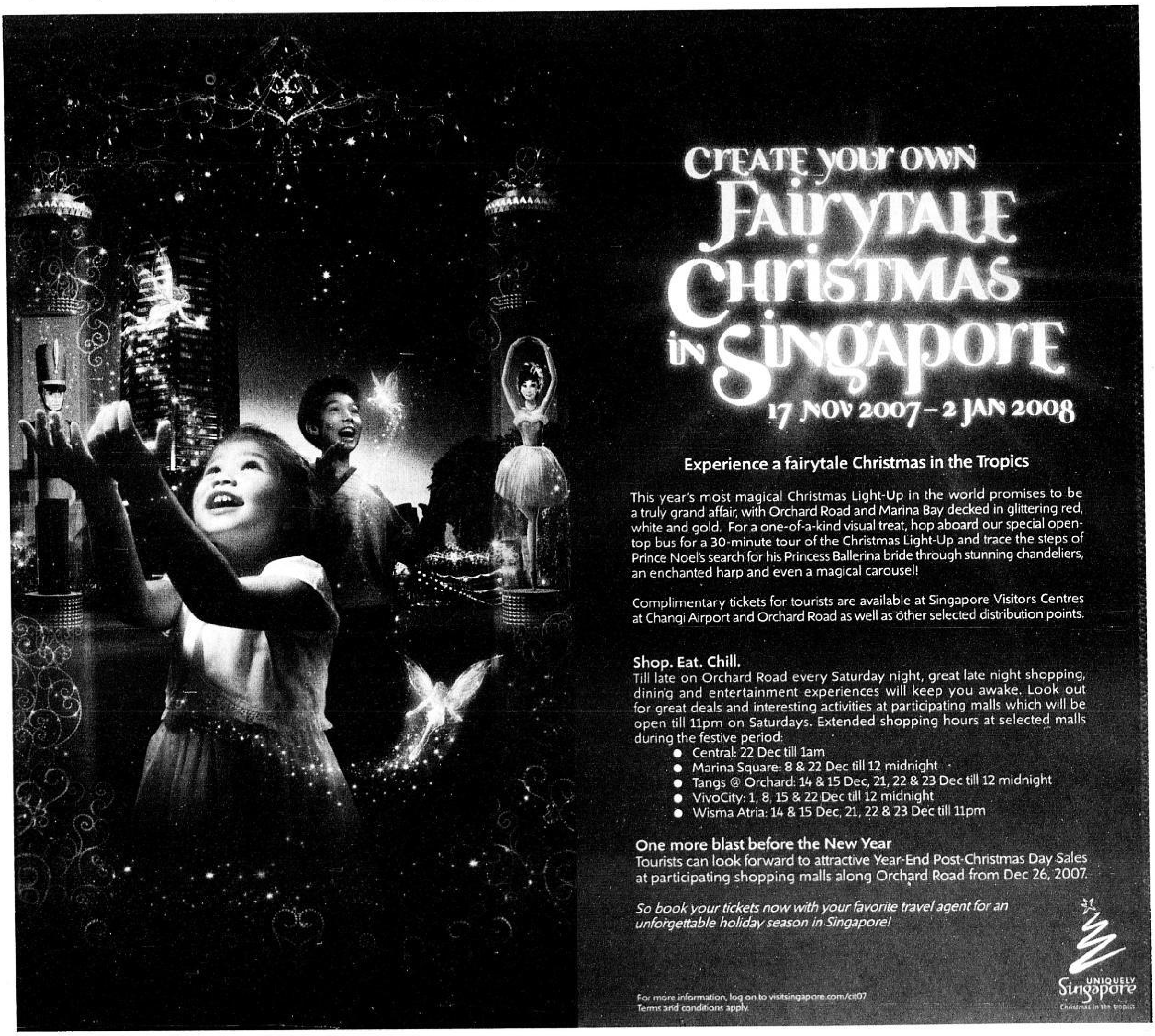
For inquiry call: +63 (02) 555 0428



Experience a fairytale Christmas in the Tropics

This year's most magical Christmas Light-Up in the world promises to be a truly grand affair, with Orchard Road and Marina Bay decked in glittering red, white and gold. For a one-of-a-kind visual treat, hop aboard our special open-top bus for a 30-minute tour of the Christmas Light-Up and trace the steps of Prince Noel's search for his Princess Ballerina bride through stunning chandeliers, an enchanted harp and even a magical carousel!

Complimentary tickets for tourists are available at Singapore Visitors Centres at Changi Airport and Orchard Road as well as other selected distribution points.

Shop. Eat. Chill.
Till late on Orchard Road every Saturday night, great late night shopping, dining and entertainment experiences will keep you awake. Look out for great deals and interesting activities at participating malls which will be open till 11pm on Saturdays. Extended shopping hours at selected malls during the festive period:

- Central: 22 Dec till 1am
- Marina Square: 8 & 22 Dec till 12 midnight
- Tangs @ Orchard: 14 & 15 Dec, 21, 22 & 23 Dec till 12 midnight
- VivoCity: 1, 8, 15 & 22 Dec till 12 midnight
- Wisma Atria: 14 & 15 Dec, 21, 22 & 23 Dec till 11pm

One more blast before the New Year
Tourists can look forward to attractive Year-End Post-Christmas Day Sales at participating shopping malls along Orchard Road from Dec 26, 2007.

So book your tickets now with your favorite travel agent for an unforgettable holiday season in Singapore!

For more information, log on to visitsingapore.com/cit07
Terms and conditions apply.

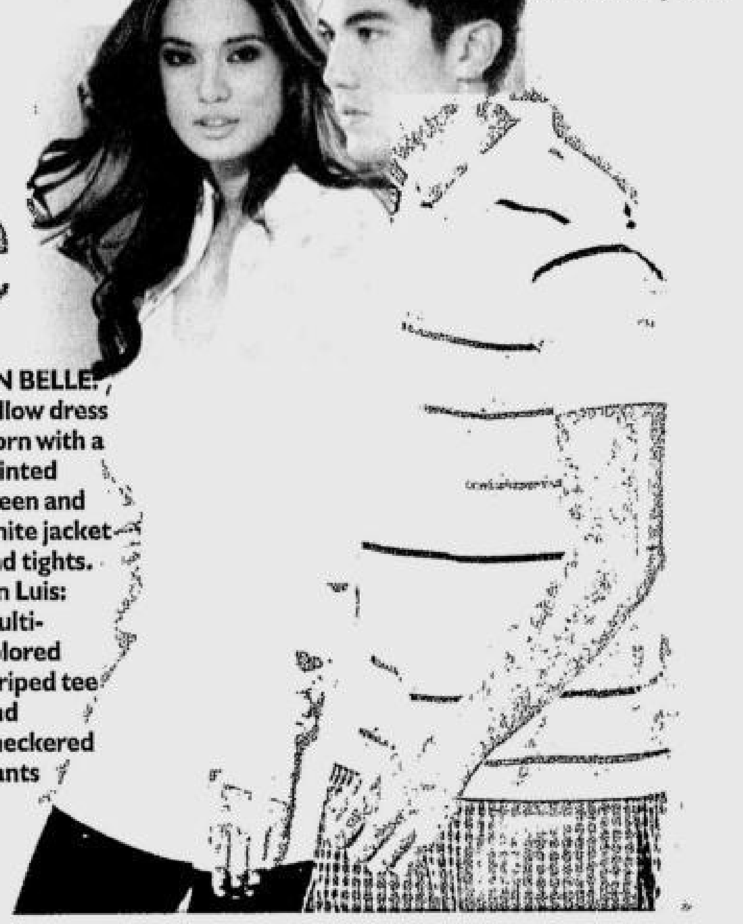
Live, love, sparkle

LUIS Manzano dons a maroon button down top over a cotton shirt and denims, while Belle sports a flannel vest over printed pink tee and denims.

THE LATEST COLLECTION FROM Human sparkles with funky mini dresses, graphic sports zip-up jackets, jumper suits with added nautical feel of blue on white stripes and twists in graphics. The fun prints, bright sparkling details and sexy silhouettes add flair to collared shirts and shorts for men and skirts and jackets for women.

Luis Manzano and Isabelle Daza don the new pieces with stellar style.

As busy celebrities, this duo's lifestyle finds favor in Human's funky pieces that allow them to go about their hectic days with ease and style. They live life with much gusto, and love what they do. They are proud of who they are, and are not afraid to show it.

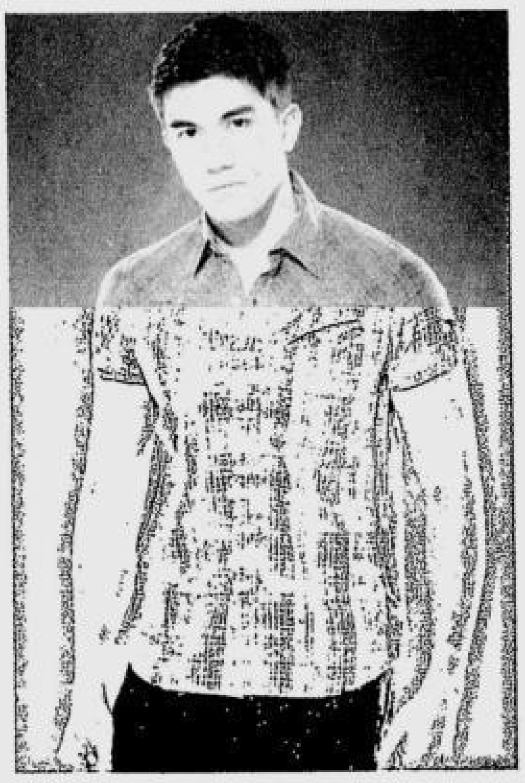


ON BELLE: yellow dress worn with a printed green and white jacket and tights. **On Luis:** multi-colored striped tee and checkered pants

Visit Human at the following branches, namely: Alabang Town Center, Alimall, Glorietta, Robinsons Galleria, Shangri-la Plaza Mall, SM Bacolod, SM Bacoor, SM Cebu, SM Mall of Asia, SM Baguio, SM Dasmariñas, SM Davao, SM Bacolod, SM Fairview, SM Iloilo, SM Lipa, SM Mall of Asia, SM Manila, SM Megamall, SM Muntinlupa, SM North Edsa, SM Pampanga, SM San Lazaro, SM Southmall, SM Santa Rosa, SM Sucat,

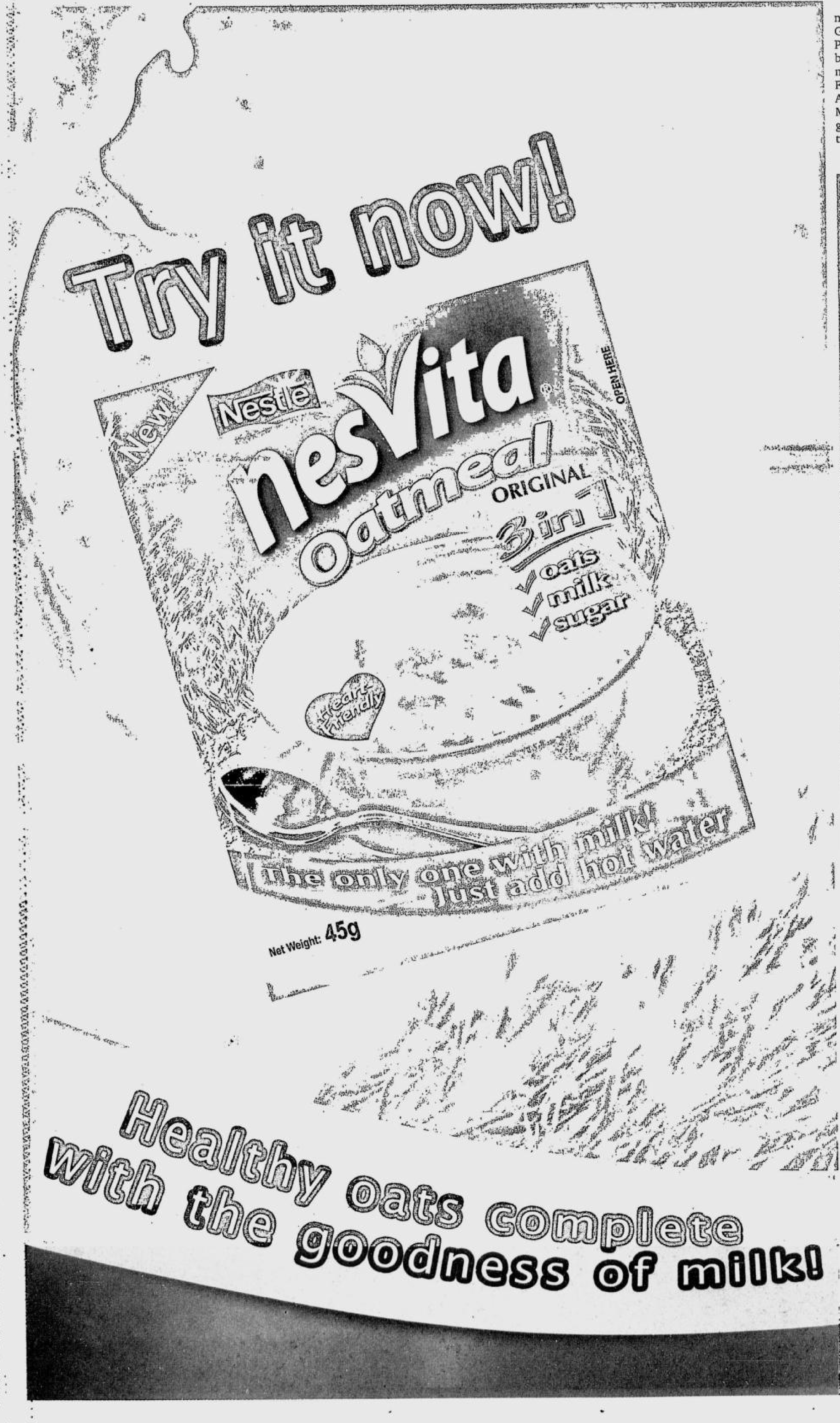
Sta. Lucia Metro East and TriNoma Mall.

SPORTY pink printed sweater with black piping and black denims



GREEN flannel button-down shirt complemented with stonewashed denims

STRIPED suspender shorts and a polka dot and striped tee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milk
sugar
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Healthy oats complete with the goodness of milk!

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2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

BEAUTY

Shining, shimmering splendor

Lancôme's Precious Light collection has raised the bar with its wonderful diamond gloss that bathes the user's lips with glam sparkle

Ria Francisco-Prieto

COLOR Fever Gloss

THIS SEASON, EVERYTHING IS aglow. And why not? The spirit of giving has once again illuminated the streets, houses and our hearts. Even the fabrics have luster, and colors this season are all jewel-toned.

Many beauty products are also packaged in gold or silver. Lancome's Precious Light collection has raised the bar with its wonderful diamond gloss that bathes the user's lips with shine and sparkle.

Created by Karim Rahman, the Precious Light collection captures the glamour of the season by mixing silver mirror effects with a rich ruby red shade. Very glamorous, but without taking away the playfulness and fun the Christmas Season brings.

I'm not choosy with gifts I receive during Christmas. Everything puts a smile on my face, but I know that if I get a Precious Carat Diamond Kiss, the star of the Precious Light collection, I will smile from ear to ear for weeks!

Every girl will understand me once she sees the Precious Carat Diamond Kiss. I know diamonds are a girl's best friend, but for me, just the packaging will do. Frankly, I don't think it is fair to use the word "just" in this case since the look is really so beautiful and a definite must-have. I think I'll get one for myself and give one to my best friend.

A true jewel, Precious Carat is the result of a perfect alliance between Lancôme and Swarovski.

Crystallized Swarovski elements are present in the Precious Carat. The unique color, baptized "Diamond Splendor," dresses lips with an array of delicate, transforming shimmers. Worn alone, its melt-in texture and transparency ensures make-up result with natural shine. When combined with an intense shade of lipstick, it adorns lips with simply sumptuous shine.

Playing on women's eternal passion for diamonds, French designer Alexis Mabille has created a beauty gem with breathtaking sparkle, cut like a solitaire, a unique jewel to slip into your handbag. It's a taste of sheer luxury that only Swarovski can inspire.

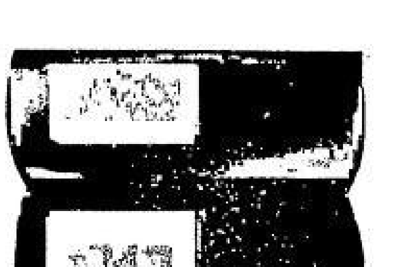
For the complexion

The blusher houses a magnificent Lancôme rose blooming within the powder, which has been pressed using a unique procedure that keeps its color right up to the last brush stroke.

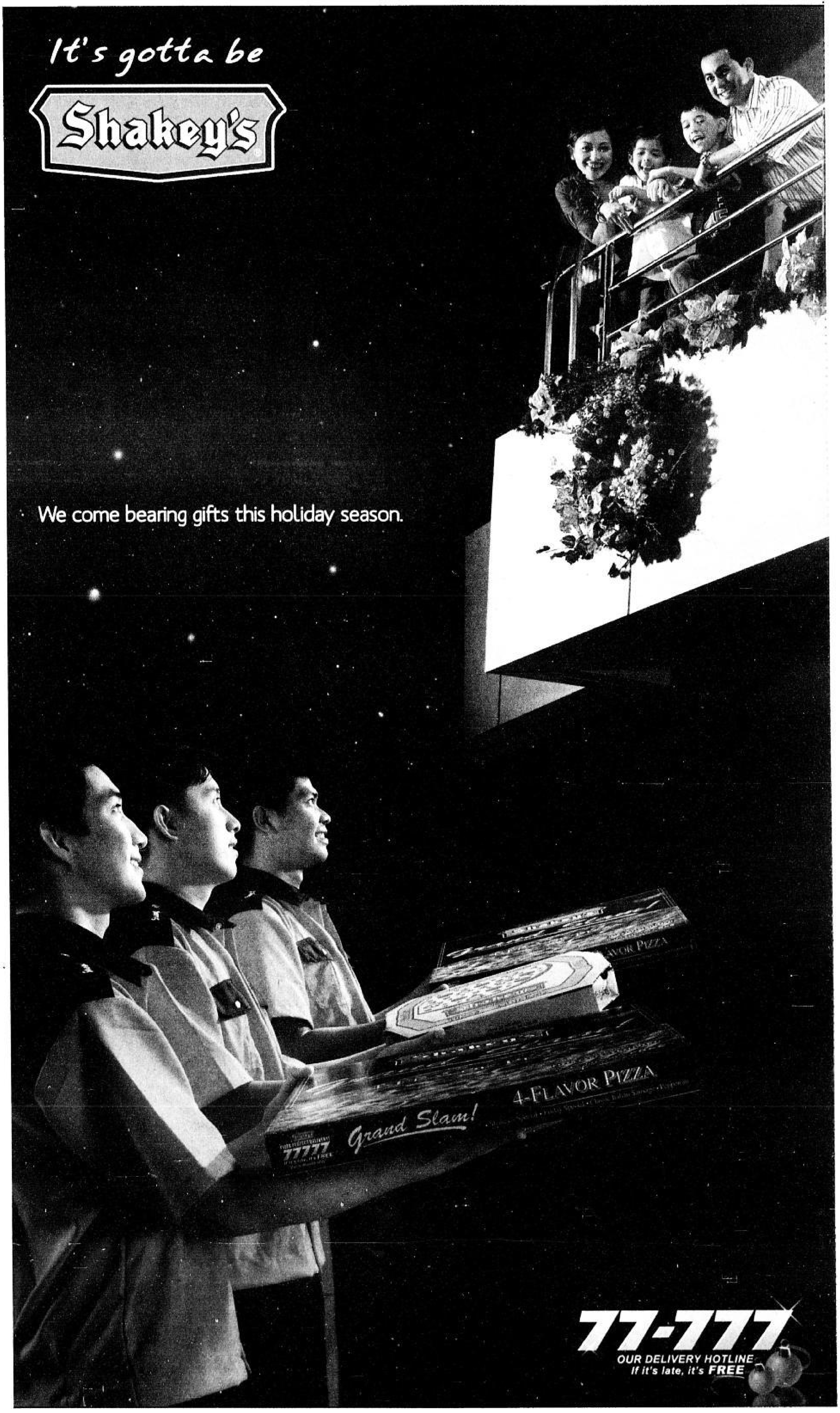
With fuchsia, red coral and threads of silver surrounding the flower, Blush Subtil gives a rosy complexion, lights up the face and illuminates cheeks with freshness.

For the eyes

Ombre Eclair is a new eyeshadow crayon with an innovative texture de-



BLUSH Subtil



MARIONNAUD gift packs include nail care brand Christina Fitzgerald from Australia, France's Christian Breton and his cosmetics line, and Denmark's Allison for skin care.

Beauty basket

MARIONNAUD Gift Packs bring together beauty products and accessories from some of the world's best niche beauty brands all in one delightful package.

The package includes nail care brand Christina Fitzgerald from Australia, France's Christian Breton and his cosmetics line, and Denmark's Allison for skin care. Some gift packs also include the famous Marionnaud Express Manicure treat.

Marionnaud is located at the 2/L of the Main Mall of the SM Mall of Asia.

Shades of Warhol

HEALTHY OPTIONS, THE LEADing one-stop shop for natural goods in the country, has opted to use Andy Warhol's pop art as takeoff point for its multi-colored gift boxes and bags for the holidays and beyond.

The Healthy Options pop art gift boxes are nice to give and nice to receive, more so when brimming with must-buy natural foods, supplement items, and personal care products formulated from natural ingredients. Single pop art wine bags also come with the customer's choice of organic wines or nonalcoholic beverages available at Healthy Options.

Individuals with special dietary requirements may also opt for sugar-free cookies, pasta, multivitamins, energy drink, and other good buys.

Andy Warhol, who inspired the gift boxes, is credited for his brightly colored and multiple images of Campbell Soup cans and other international labels and popular consumer brand names.

In the 1960s, Warhold did portraits of the rich and famous. He is well-remembered for his pop art silk screens and painted portraits of such personalities as Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, and James Dean. In 1969, he created "Interview" magazine and placed on its covers numerous well-known personalities.

Celebrate the season the fun and retro way, with Andy Warhol-inspired gift boxes from Healthy Options. Or you may encourage friends and family to try the healthy lifestyle by giving them practical Healthy Options gift cards in P200, P500 and P1,000 denominations. These allow the recipients to choose just what they want at Healthy Options, the leading one-stop shop for natural products in the Philippines.

Stores are located at major malls. Opening before the year ends is a branch at the new upscale wing in SM City Cebu called "The North." Visit the Healthy Options website at www.healthyoptions.com.ph.

gluten & wheat-free

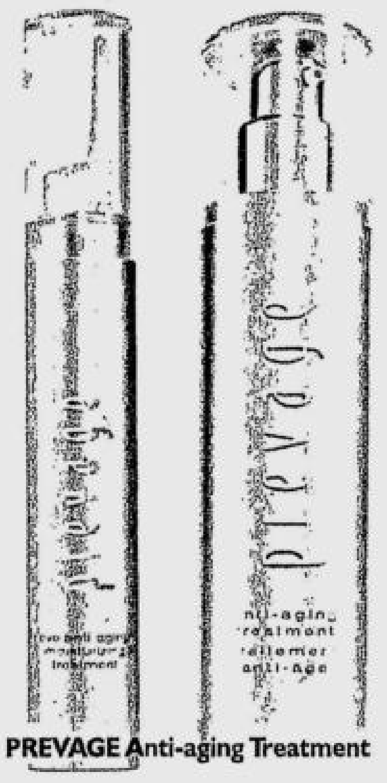
New treatment to revitalize your skin

PREVAGE ANTI-AGING TREATment is a dermatology-inspired formula that protects and restores skin. It is the result of an exclusive collaboration between Elizabeth Arden, a leading prestige cosmetics company, and Allergan, one of the foremost specialty pharmaceutical companies.

Formulated by a team of dermatological scientists and cosmetic chemists, this revolutionary new anti-aging breakthrough alters the chain reaction that can result in skin that looks prematurely aged. It contains Idebenone, an antioxidant with powerful protective and revitalizing effects.

In clinical tests with Prevage anti-aging treatment, subjects with moderate and severe sun damage exhibited significant improvement in their appearance. Skin looked firmer and less lined, the appearance of dark spots and discolorations was diminished and skin looked smooth-textured and more radiant.

The key ingredient in Prevage is Idebenone, one of the most potent and effective antioxidants on the market today. This orange powder, originally used in the medical field, has been shown to have enormous potential in skincare.



PREVAGE Anti-aging Treatment

The power of Prevage comes to eyes with Prevage Eye anti-aging moisturizing treatment, a new cosmeceutical formula from Elizabeth Arden and Allergan. This new total eyecare treatment with I-Seryl Complex brings skin around the eye area the proven antioxidant capabilities of Idebenone and a blend of advanced ingredients that take on puffiness, dark circles, crow's feet and other eyecare concerns.

I-Seryl Complex delivers a multi-dimensional blend of advanced ingredients that address the special needs of the eye area.

- Peptides target crow's feet and help maintain optimum natural collagen levels to promote firmness.
- Algae extract helps smooth the look of fine lines and wrinkles and give eyes a more lifted appearance.
- Haloxyl works to brighten, tighten and tone the appearance of skin in the eye area to visibly minimize dark circles and puffiness.

In addition to I-Seryl Complex, Green Tea Extract works with Idebenone and helps to neutralize free radicals that can cause premature aging of the skin. Advanced moisturizers hydrate and smooth to give eyes a smooth, refreshed look.

Prevage Eye anti-aging moisturizing treatment is available at Rustan's Makati, Rustan's Shangri-La and Rustan's Alabang.

Hydrate your skin not the contents of your bag

THE JERGENS® SKINCARE experts unveil the latest in modern skin care—the new spill-proof 25-ml bottle—via a 30-second advertising spot. It features the new moisturizer format that was developed to address the clamor by women-on-the-go for handy packaging minus infuriating spills from lotion in sachets.

Skin care savvy ladies know that skin hydration is needed throughout the day, especially since hand washing and exposure to heat and air-conditioning can strip the skin of moisture. By re-applying a moisturizer, lost lipids are replenished. But these same ladies are often lured into using lotion in sachets, unfortunately, mega-messes occur all the time. These horrifying lotion leak experiences were addressed by the Jergens skin care experts with a packaging innovation.

The new Jergens Moisturizer spill-proof 25ml bottle answers not just size and convenience issues, but especially skin care specific as it comes in three variants. The classic Jergens Original Scent Cherry-Almond Moisturizer provides hydration for 24-hours of silky smooth, nice-smelling skin. The skin's roughest spots are restored and its moisture content is tripled through regular application of Jergens Ultra Healing Extra Dry Skin Moisturizer. With Jergens Age Defying Multi-Vitamin Moisturizer that contains Vitamins A, E, and C, skin elasticity is improved, delaying the signs of skin aging. These formulations are a great help to calm areas that are most prone to dryness and roughness: the hands, arms, knees, legs and heels.

Jergens Moisturizer spill-proof 25ml bottle allows no-mess skin hydration anytime, anywhere. Now available in supermarkets, drug stores and health and beauty stores nationwide.

Oasis of beauty and wellness

LOCATED IN ORTIGAS CENTER in Pasig City, La Estetica is a chic and private aesthetic center dedicated to offering the best beauty services to select clients. It offers a complete scope of health care services for the skin, hair and nails, with emphasis on body and facial cosmetic surgery.

The clinic has a pool of highly-competent board-certified cosmetic surgeons who constantly undergo continuous education to expand their knowledge and develop their expertise. Heading the team is Dr. Almond L. Derla, La Estetica's CEO and medical director who is a specialist in clinical and cosmetic dermatology.

Dr. Derla was the recipient of the prestigious 2007 Asia-Pacific Excellence Young Professional Award for Medicine and Allied Sciences by the Asia Pacific Excellence Awards.

Complementing the experienced medical practitioners are the supporting staff, which are highly-skilled and well-trained to provide patients with the best care they deserve.

Bigger and better, La Estetica offers its clients an array of safe, minimally invasive, nonsurgical and surgical procedures, all of them outpatient in nature, allowing client to recuperate in the comfort of their home.

Among the cosmetic procedures offered at La Estetica are nose lift, eyebag removal, slit eye, facelift, liposuction, tummy tuck, dimple creation, penile enlargement, chin augmentation, bust lift, butt lift, and hair transplant.

LA ESTETICA
dermatology

DR. ALMOND L. Derla, La Estetica CEO and medical director

Other familiar skin care methodologies available are intensive skin analysis, facials utilizing state-of-the-art machines without pricking, large pores treatment, ultrasonic facials, facials with state-of-the-art toning device, diamond peeling, dermabrasion, chemical peels, plus the painless removal of warts, syringoma, milia and mole using a needle-type, minimally invasive Hyfrecator machine to avoid scarring.

La Estetica extensively uses the new generation intense pulse light device (IPL) called "Cold IPL," a pain-free machine designed to eliminate sun spots, blemishes, age spots and melasma. Cold IPL is an excellent tool for hair removal, facial rejuvenation and facial tightening and treatment for acne.

New procedures include fractionalized skin needling for acne scars, which shows impressive results, and standard machines include the carboxytherapy machine, mesolipo, mesofat, lipodissolve, and radio frequency.

La Estetica is at Megaplaza Building, ADB Ave., corner Garnet Road, Ortigas Center in Pasig City. Call 6877857 or 9140860, or visit www.laesteticainternational.com.

Shining, shimmering splendor

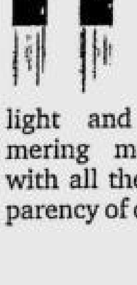
From page J1

signed for practical, rapid application and intense, luminous and sophisticated results.

Three strong colors—silver, green and rose—bring to mind precious stones. Soft and smooth, their texture ensures easy application and gives eyelids a vinyl shine.

For the lips

Sparkling, shimmering and simply stunning, the Color Fever Gloss shades make lips resonate with a thousand sparkling bubbles that metamorphose into micro-sequins on application. The result: light and shimmering make-up, with all the transparency of crystal.



OMBRE
Eclair

Pampering treats to beat holiday stress

CHRISTMAS IS ONE OF THE busiest times of the year.

Just thinking about the endless Christmas chores and errands can cause stress and make you feel like you cannot wait until the holiday is over.

Do not let this happen to you. Take a break, de-stress and pamper yourself at The Spa.

For the holiday season, The Spa is introducing a new treatment package called Earthly Passion. It begins with the Honey Body Polish that exfoliates to slough off dead skin cells.

Hydration then follows, a warm bath with all-natural ingredients like pure honey and milk.

The Executive Aromatherapy massage is a gentle soothing massage using aromatic essential oils designed to achieve equilibrium and improve mental and physical health.

The Earthly Passion package comes with either a Fango Mud Facial that uses mineral-enriched mud from Tuscany's volcanic hills that leave skin hydrated, firmer and invigorated; or the Moor Spa Facial with ingredients that purify the skin and pores, reduce wrinkles, and rejuvenate the complexion.

Every Earthly Passion package comes with one free P1,000 Wellness Gift Card, available until Dec. 31.

The Spa has other best-selling pampering treatments. The Volcanic Rock massage uses hot basalt stones for to relieve aching muscles and to induce deep relaxation.

THE SPA introduces the Earthly Passion packages this holiday season.

The Spa's Coffee Rub is a healing, soothing and revitalizing treatment. It uses coffee as a gentle yet stimulating exfoliant. The treatment is capped by the unique Vichy Shower for a soft and silky feeling.

With a full body massage, the result is complete revitalizing experience.

For totally calming experience, there is the Javanese Royal Bath that begins with a soothing massage followed by a Lulur scrub, an exfoliating clay with unique cleansing properties. A cool slathering of milk calms and nourishes the skin. A floral bath completes the experience.

The Spa also has gift bundles, a set of products from Babor, Phytomer, Decleor and The Natural Source. A price-off voucher comes with each gift bundle.

The Spa has branches in Acropolis (tel. 6422848); Alabang (8503490); Bel-Air (8955858); Greenbelt (8401325) and The Podium (6388388). New branches are opening soon in The Fort and TriNoma. Visit www.thespa.com.ph.

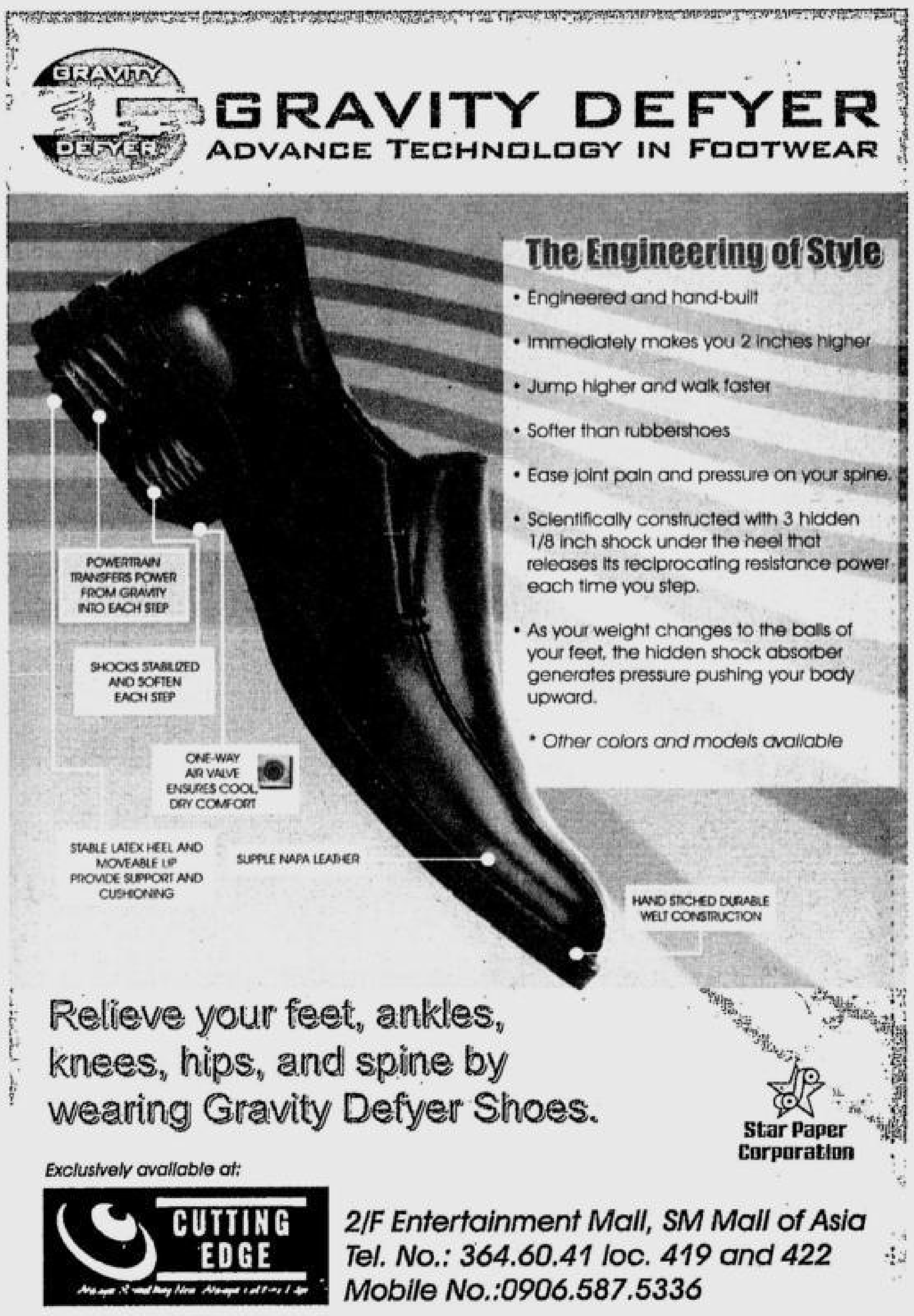
Wear Gravity Defyer shoes and relieve your feet, ankles, knees, hips, and spine and give your whole body a break from the pressures of your daily life. Gain the confidence that comes with exemplary posture and added height without appearing like you are wearing platform shoes.

So how do you get all this just from a shoe?
It started with the research of rubber for the construction and automobile industries. Scientists investigating shocks absorption for buildings during earthquakes discovered a special polymer that was both lightweight and absorbed shock and vibration. This material lead to the revolutionary material used in the Catapult MMXT3 Gravity Defying Shoe. The researchers and the engineers behind the Gravity Defying Shoe surprised the entire industry when they launched the first of its kind energy reciprocating shock-absorbing sole in a dress shoe.

What is in the Gravity Defyer shoe?
It was scientifically constructed with a hidden 1/8-inch shock under the heel that releases its reciprocating resistance power each time you step. As your weight changes to the balls of your feet, the hidden shock absorber generates pressure pushing your body upward. This mechanism gives you the feeling of jumping each time you step with the Gravity Defyer Shoe.

Appear Nearly 2" Taller
When wearing Gravity Defyer Shoes you will instantly gain two inches of height without looking like you are wearing platform or elevator shoes. This is because of elegant design of the Sole Kangaroo inside the sole and not on the bottom of the shoe.

Ease Joint Pain and Pressure on Your Spine
The insole, mid-sole, and arch part of the Garavity Defyer shoes gives your foot and ankle the proper support to align all the joints of your legs. This support of leads straight into your hip and spine, comforting your torso and easing the pressure on your entire body. There is also a magnetic disc directly below the heel that promotes blood circulation.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- As your weight changes to the balls of your feet, the hidden shock absorber generates pressure pushing your body upward.

* Other colors and models available

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A Christmas gift idea that's just *write.*

Maybe you're trying to make a good impression on certain people, and you're stuck trying to find Christmas presents that are neither too personal nor devoid of personality. Or perhaps you're just torn between fruitcake that nobody ever eats and picture frames that nobody ever finds amusing. Either way, you could use a little help with your choices.

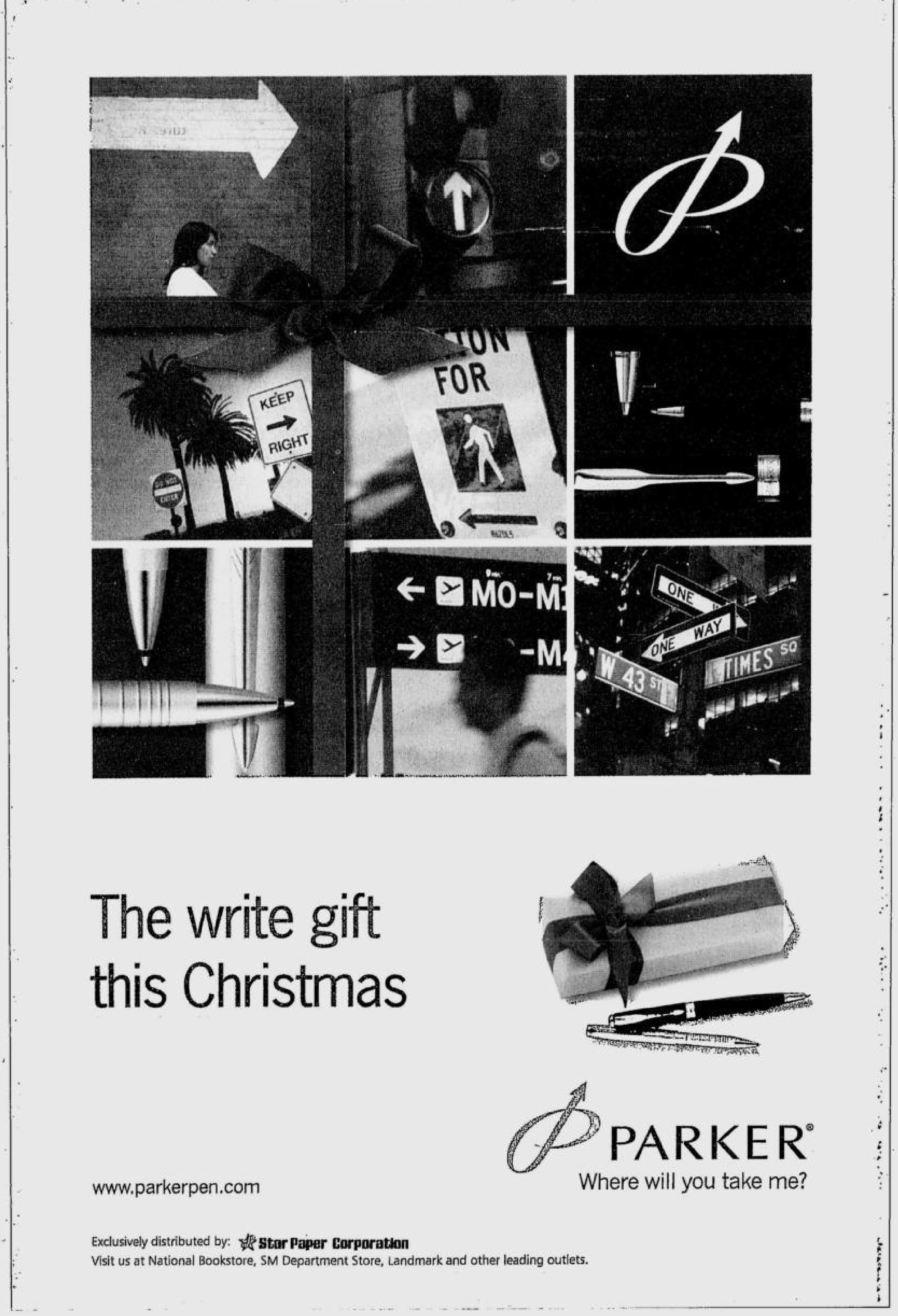
But fear not—even as you rack your brain trying to come up with your Christmas list, the answer could well be right there in your hand: a pen!

Think about it. Pretty much everybody uses pens, and we all use them generally in the same way—techies and technophobes alike. It's an easy purchase, too. No need to fuss about details like waistlines, shoe sizes, musical preferences, possible allergies...

And if you worry about it being too impersonal or boring, then you probably haven't seen Parker's wide range of pens. With so many models and designs to choose from, there's one to please everyone on your list—from the most preppy of your co-workers to the biggest jock in your gang. Of course, you can pick one out for yourself too, for that "from-me-to-me" gift that you so rightfully deserve. And since it's a Parker, it's sure to write smoothly and reliably, no matter which design you choose.

And because you can buy gifts for a bunch of your friends in one fell swoop, it even spares you the Christmas rush! Parker pens are available in selected National Bookstore, SM, and Landmark branches.

(Oh, and—just think of how much you'll save on gift wrapping.)



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CELLUSOLVE Plus

Smoothening out skin marks caused by stress

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

SOME BRIDES BLOOM AND lose weight without even trying, but not in my case! My last gown-fitting saw me bawling out in tears. Stress had caused me to gain weight since the first fitting so my gown did not zip up above the waist. My lower stomach had that pooch and my back fat was overflowing like lava from a volcano.

Skin-wise, I found I had two holes on the right side of my face, courtesy of cystic acne that no amount of skincare and exfoliation could stop from breaking. I had the deep lesions injected holes would deflate.

Dark marks from late October's wart cautery were still there as well. There is so much work to do that there literally is no time for treatments and work outs.

My solution: I escaped to Hong Kong for a full week with products to road-test (I did not activate roaming so I wouldn't be distracted).

CLEANSE Smart Day and Night Cleansing program

Skin marks

Based on my experience, the hole on my cheek and jaw will fill out by the wedding so nothing left to do but wait. As for the marks, Obagi Clear 3 lotion erased most of my marks and faded the rest to the point of near invisibility.

Diamond Peels with Vitamin C at Godiva and Obagi Oxygen Facials at Belo evened out my skin tone and made the pores shrink.

Jet Peel at Belo is a form of Microdermabrasion that uses a spray of water and oxygen with Vitamin C solution to exfoliate dead cells, hydrate skin and treat skin damage. You end up with baby skin and it helps the holes become shallower.

Weight loss, body sculpting

Here are some Christmas gift ideas:

1. Pedometer (P180 at Outdoor store in Park Square Makati)—It takes 10,000 steps a day to maintain one's weight and 12,500 to 15,000 steps to lose weight.

For the whole week, we walked a minimum of 27,000 and a maximum of 42,900 steps, uphill and downhill.

Downside: Swollen muscles weigh more than fat so your weight will not go down, which is really discouraging. So do not judge weight loss by how clothes fit.

2. Cleanse Smart 30-day Program—Internal Body Cleansing tablets with all-natural minerals and herbs to regulate digestion and bathroom habits. It also clears out backlog that causes bloating, acne and extra weight.

I went on a low-carbohydrate, high-protein diet, which quickly sheds fat and inches. But it gave me bad breath and impaired bathroom habits. I started it a week before the trip, so there were no breakouts, bloating and lost almost four inches on the waist and thighs combined.

3. Massages on cellulite and flab-ridden area with Life-Flo CelluSolve Plus Maximum Strength, (P999) at Health Express.

One pump is perfect for the problem area—from buttocks to thighs. The delivery system is such that the molecules are so small that they can penetrate the pores.

A three-minute massage is enough to improve circulation and boost skin firmness and look. (Had a masseuse apply it on me three times a week for more intensity.)

Breakthrough present

Mikaela Eyelash Growth Conditioner at P1,350 is a remarkable breakthrough that addresses the appearance of thinning and brittle eyelashes.

Now you can dramatically enhance the appearance of your eyelashes and promote a fuller, thicker, lush-looking fringe. The counterparts in the US cost $250 or P10,000.

Mikaela Eyelash Growth Conditioner—Apply once per day in the evening to upper lash line.

Keep in mind that only a small amount of product is necessary for each application, so please use sparingly. Apply gel with applicator brush in a thin line along upper lash line at the root area (as though you are applying eyeliner). Results are seen after 4 to 8 weeks. Call 8187469 (Makati branch) or 8561925 (Fort)

Warning: Do not get into the eye. If eye is touched, rinse immediately with water. Discontinue use if redness or irritation occurs.

MIKAELA Eyelash Growth Conditioner

Mikaela
Eyelash Growth

In this season
of sharing,
share
what's cool & clean:
C2 Green Tea

From the first week of December, our calendar starts to be booked with one Christmas party after the other. And usually this means sharing deliciously rich feasts with friends and family. It's hard to stay healthy when there's just so much fabulous food tempting you. At least make sure you drink something that's good for you!

Make C2 Green Tea your Christmas drink. Delicately brewed from natural green tea leaves and bottled on the same day, C2 has the wonderful flavor of real green tea with all its healthy goodness. Green tea helps reduce the risk of heart problems and lowers high blood pressure. Instead of absorbing the cholesterol, green tea prompts the body to increase the amount of fat it releases. In a way, it helps undo all the effects of that holiday ham and other sinful dishes you're sure to be indulging in!

Be a good host and serve C2 Green Tea to your guests too! C2 has a great variety of flavors that caters to different tastes: green tea plain, lemon, apple, peach, strawberry, forest fruits, kiwi and lychee. You can offer individual servings with the 350 mL and 500 mL bottles. For the low-calorie and sugar-free Christmas fix, try the C2 Lite variants of apple, lemon and green tea plain. For the numerous gatherings and parties, C2 Liter is perfect for sharing!

In the true spirit of Christmas, part of every purchase of C2 bought from December 8 to 22 in Robinson's Cebu, Galleria and Ermita, Market! Market!, Tiendesitas, Alabang Town Center, Trinoma and Foodparks (Enterprise, LKG Tower and GT Tower) will be donated to World Vision, a humanitarian organization working to make the world a better place for underprivileged children.

Share something really good this season. Share C2 Green Tea.

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DID YOU KNOW...

Hicks' drummer is Fil-Am

RIVERMAYA MANAGER LIZZA NAKPIL SAYS American Idol Taylor Hicks' drummer is "a good-looking Pinoy named Michael Agorilla." Hicks and Rivermaya guested on "Asian Idol" on Sunday. Nakpil also said Indonesian Idol Mike Mohede asked to do a duet with the Pinoy rockers on their original "Balisong." Alas, it didn't get into the program.

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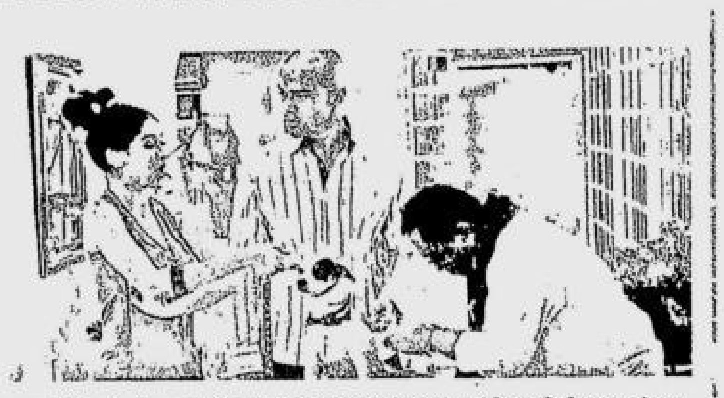
METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2007



(*INQUIRER Entertainment is running this MMFF guide to help moviegoers plan their holiday cinema tour. The festival runs from Dec. 25 to Jan. 7, 2008.*)

"Desperadas: All They Need Is Love"

Regal Entertainment
Stars: **Ruffa Gutierrez, Rufa Mae Quinto, Iza Calzado and Marian Rivera**
Directed by Joel Lamangan

The film is a comedy about four half-sisters and how they cope with family issues. In the end, they realize that all they need to do so is love. Gutierrez plays the bratty Isabela, a single mother. Quinto is the carefree Patricia, a sexologist by profession. Iza Calzado portrays the demure and conservative lawyer Stephanie. She secretly buys the book Patricia has written, in an attempt to save her marriage. Rivera portrays Courtney, the youngest, a swim wear/underwear designer engaged to a basketball star.

Marian drops hint she may do 'Darna'

By Gerry Plaza
Contributor

THE SUCCESSFUL RUN OF "Marimar," one of the most watched *teleserye* programs this year, has boosted lead star Marian Rivera's career.

"Palipad na po ang susunod kong telenovela," she said during the press launch of her PLDT Touch Cards campaign last week at Merk's in Greenbelt 3. The statement seemed to confirm rumors that Marian is being groomed to portray "Darna" in a new series.

There are reports that GMA 7 will revive the top-rating fantasy series, which starred Angel Locsin as the mythical Pinay heroine. There are also talks that the Kapuso network is planning to cast Marian in either "Dyesebel," another oft-remade *komiks* classic, or "Rosalinda," another Thalia starrer that, like "Marimar," had a large following in the Philippines.

Marian said she was not portraying Dyesebel or Rosalinda in her next project. *"Binibigay ko lang po ang aking* 100 percent *sa lahat ng binibigay sa akin,"* she added cryptically.

Rivera thanked televiewers for the continued high ratings of "Marimar" and said she would continue giving her best, as with the rest of the cast, in each of the forthcoming episodes of the local adaptation of the Mexican telenovela, which is slated to end in March 2008.

Next big star

Obviously, Marian was groomed by GMA 7 as its "next big star" after Angel moved to ABS-CBN. The popularity of "Marimar" indicates that Marian has met the Kapuso network's high expectations. Her daily exposure on prime time TV has led to a string of commercial endorsement deals, such as this one for PLDT Touch Card.

Maria on Elijah: He looks like me

By Marinel R. Cruz

AWARD-WINNING ACTRESS Maricel Soriano is looking forward to spending Christmas with four-month old Elijah, her niece Meryll's son by Bernard Palanca.

"*Ang gwapo n'ya.* He looks so much like me," Maricel said of the boy. Meryll is the daughter of Maricel's sister Bec-Bec and comedian Willie Revillame.

"Because of him, the whole family will be together on Christmas Day, that's for sure," Maricel told entertainment writers during a press conference for her latest film, "Bahay Kubo: A Pinoy Mano Po," a Metro Manila Film Festival entry.

The actress said she didn't mind playing mother roles, although she would like to tackle "off-beat" characters in the future.

"*Kasi, nanay naman talaga ako,*" she said, referring to her adopted son Marron, and Sebastien, her child with businessman-politician Cesar Jalosjos.

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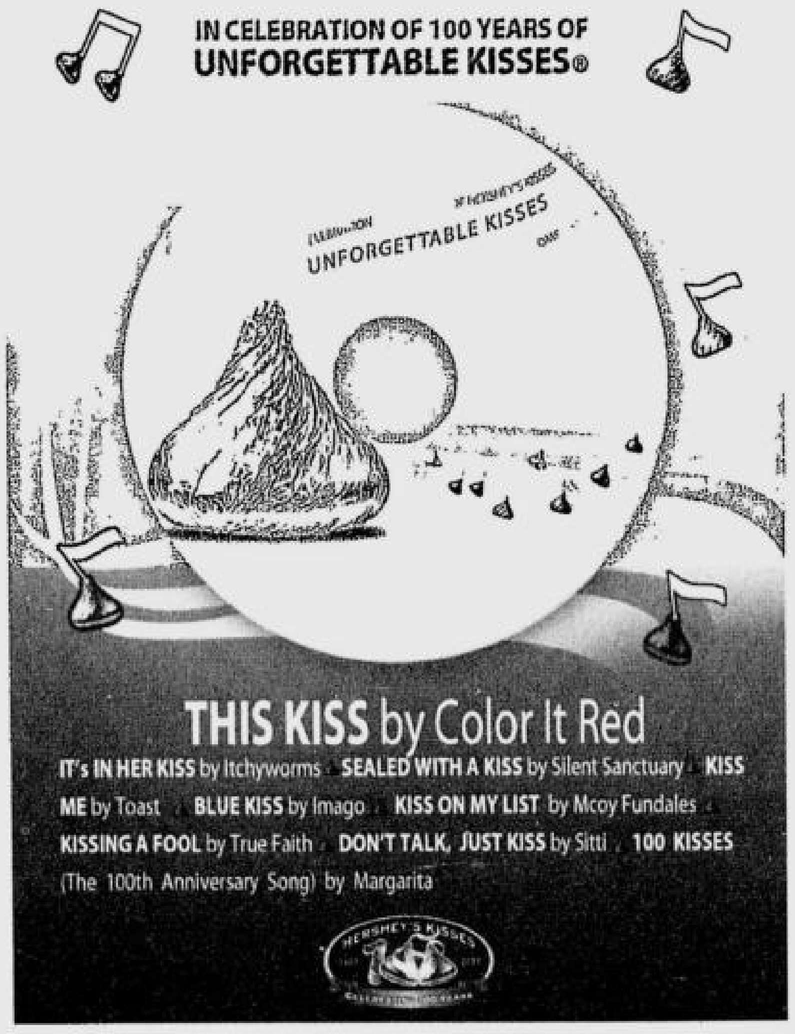

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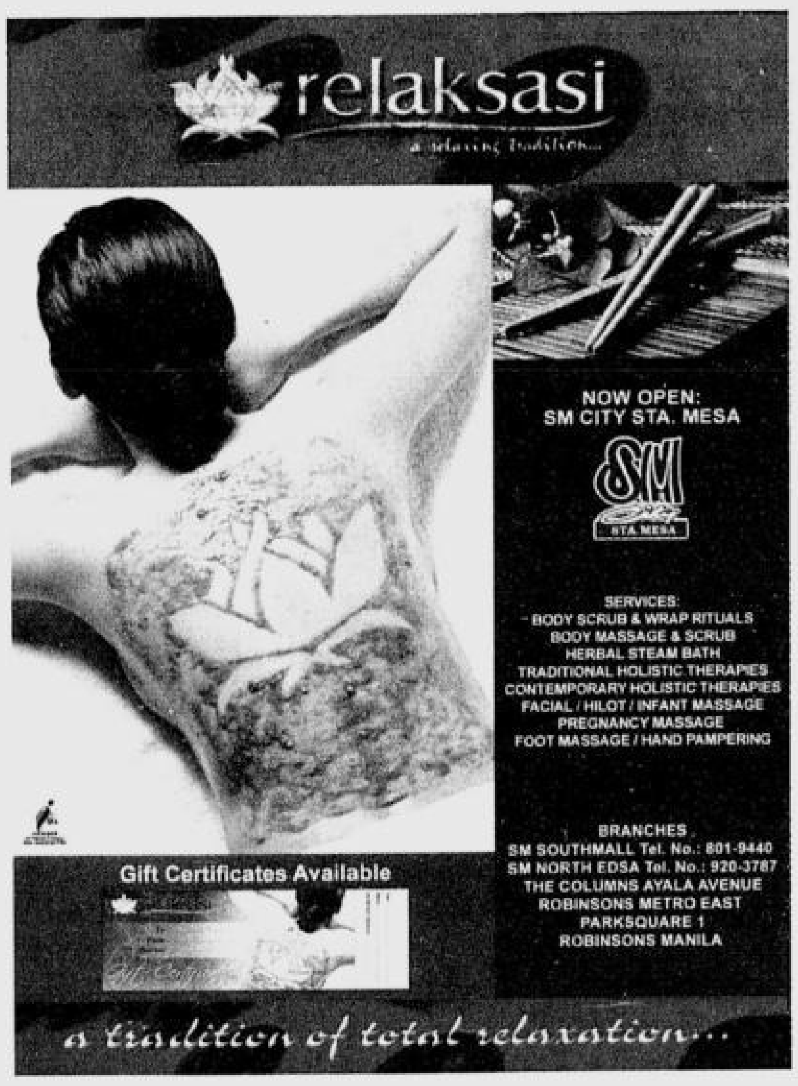

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Feb. 8-9, 15-16 , 2008	Sitti , Rey Valera	8:00 PM
February 11 , 2008	Kyla w/ Shamrock ,Cueshe & Mojofly	8:00 PM

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2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:35
PG-13
3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:30
PG-13
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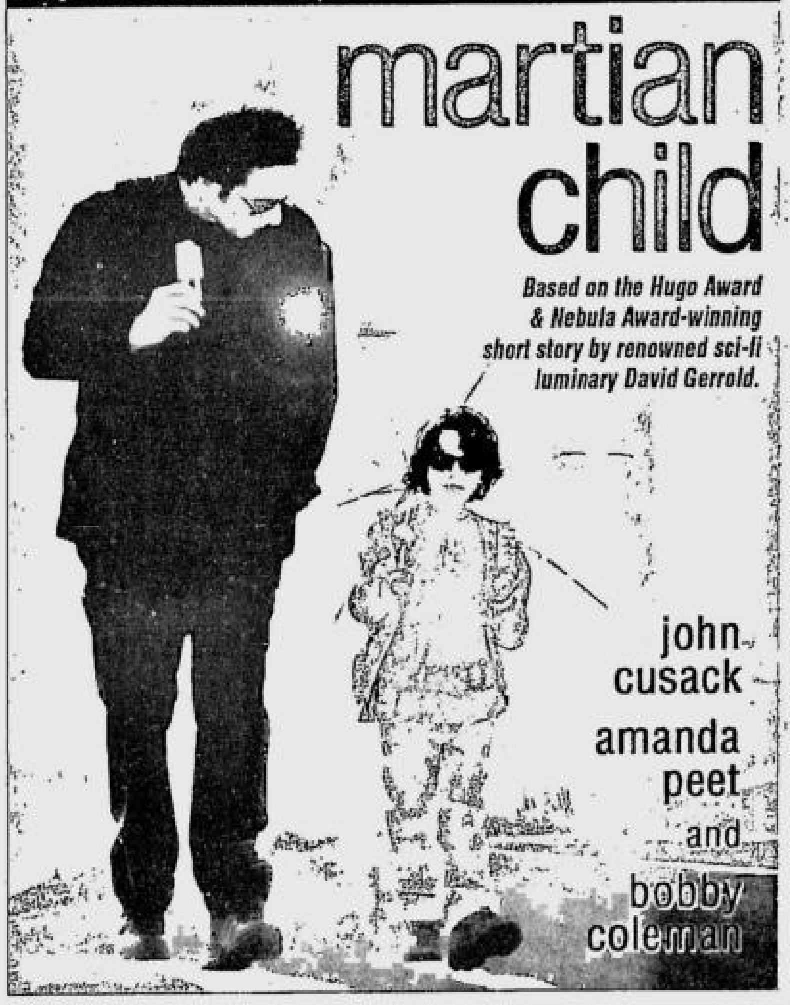

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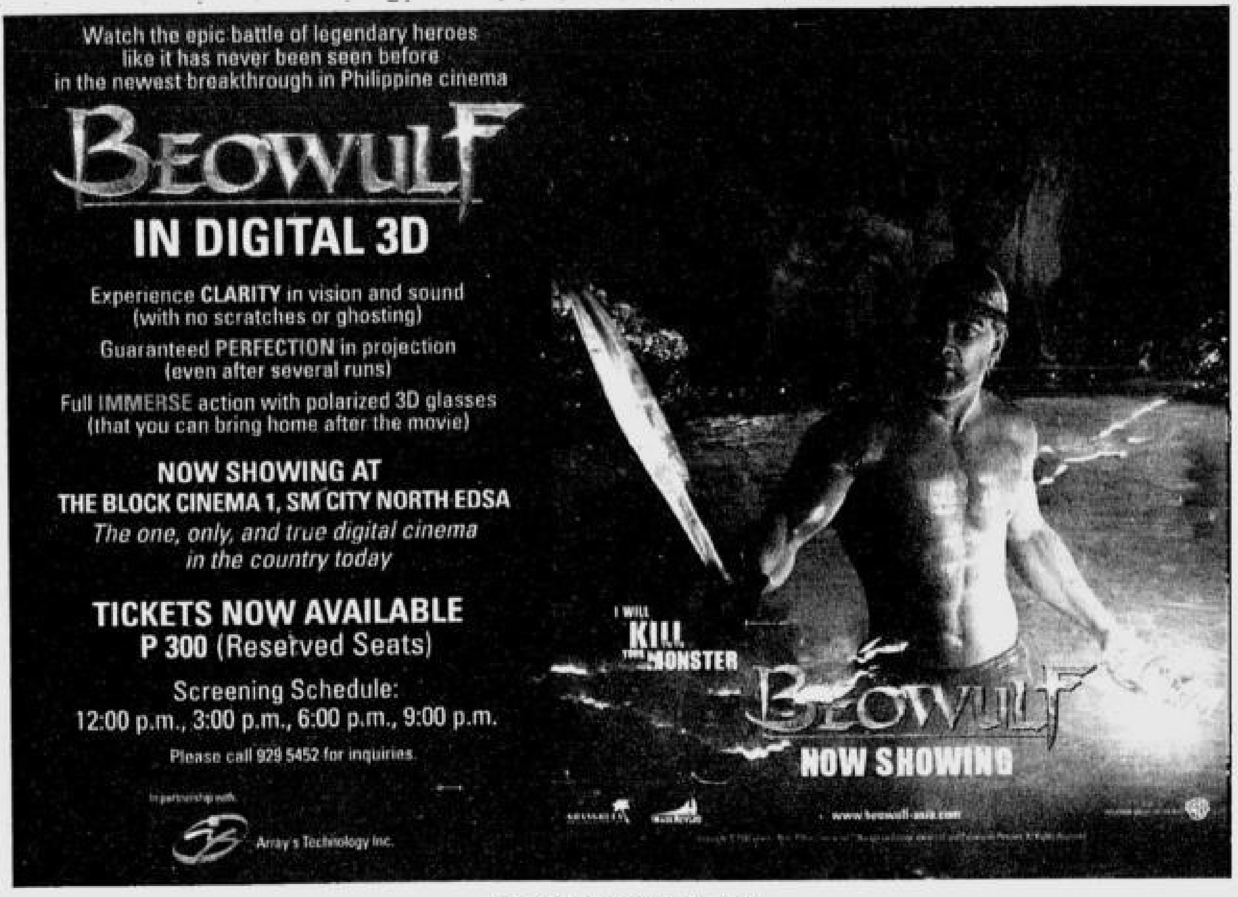

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9 BLOCKBUSTER FILMFEST
10 KIDDIE FESTIVAL
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3 ENCHANTED
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9 HITMAN
10 PASUKOB
11 CARTOON NETWORK/ ELIZABETH
12 BLOCKBUSTER FILMFEST

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3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 BEOWULF
5 GOLDEN COMPASS
6 THE KINGDOM
7 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
8 BATANES
9 ENCHANTED
10 DEATH PROOF
11 BLOCKBUSTER FILMFEST
12 CARTOON NETWORK/ HITMAN

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4 BATANES

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2 PASUKOB
3 BATANES
4 ENCHANTED

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2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 PASUKOB
4 HOOD OF HORROR

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3 PASUKOB
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

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2 RENDITION
3 EL CANTANTE
4 THE KINGDOM/ CARTOON NETWORK
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3 HITMAN
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2 HITMAN
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5 CARTOON NETWORK/EL CANTANTE
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2 FRED CLAUSE/ PASUKOB
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4 BATANES

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2 FRED CLAUSE/ CARTOON NETWORK
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5 THE KINGDOM
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2 FRED CLAUSE/ GOLDEN COMPASS
3 BATANES
4 THE KINGDOM

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2 RESERVED
3 HITMAN
4 GOLDEN COMPASS
5 RESERVED
6 EASTERN PROMISES
7 THE GAMEPLAN
8 ENCHANTED

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8 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010

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2 HITMAN
3 FRED CLAUSE
4 GOLDEN COMPASS

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Ticket Price THX: P160 130 Indie Sine: 130 632-9116

1 HITMAN • THX
1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30

2 MARTIAN CHILD
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

3 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

4 GAME PLAN
1:05 3:15 5:25 7:35 9:45

5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 ENCHANTED
12:50 3:00 5:10 7:20 9:30

7 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

8 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS
12:40 2:45 4:50 6:55 9:00

9 BATANES
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

10 BEOWULF
2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00

ERMITA

Ticket Price: P120 536-7810 TO 12

1 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
1:00 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00

2 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS
2:40 4:30 6:20 8:10

3 BEOWULF 12:00 2:10 4:20
HITMAN 6:35 8:20 10:00

4 HOOD of HORROR
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40

5 BATANES
12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40

6 ENCHANTED
12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40

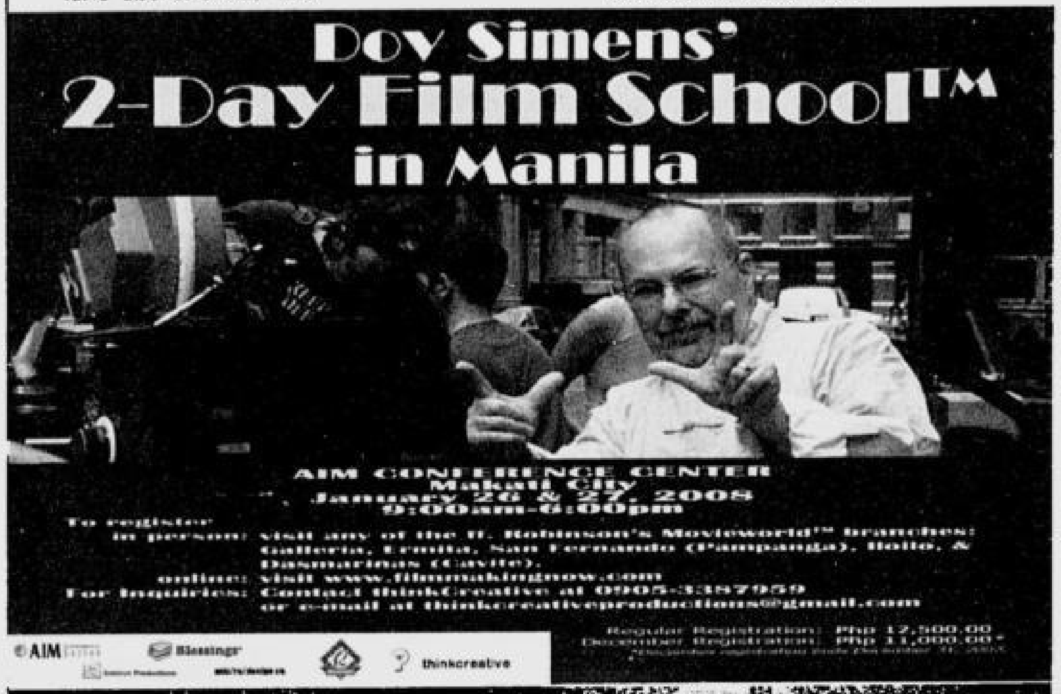
7 GAME PLAN
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40

Midtown

1 MARTIAN CHILD
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00



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2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
1:30 3:55 6:25 9:00

3 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

4 BATANES
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

5 BEOWULF
1:00 3:35 6:10 9:00

6 ENCHANTED
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

8 CATACOMBS
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

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2 BATANES
3 HOOD of HORROR
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3 MARTIAN CHILD
4 ENCHANTED

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4 BATANES

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From Borat…

From page K4

There's one incredibly high note at the end of my piece. I don't think Tim knows this but when I went in to record, I couldn't actually reach the high note even with spandex (laughter). Once Tim left the recording session, I brought in a very fat female opera singer and got her to sing the final note (laughter). So the final note was actually sung by a 200-pound look-alike of mine who's actually female.

Do you feel sad that Borat and Ali G are so popular now that you have to abandon them because everyone knows them and you can't pose as these characters anymore?

Definitely. You learn to love the characters, especially since you play them for a long time. When I was doing Ali G or Borat, I was in character sometimes 14 hours a day. You become the character so admitting that you're never going to play the character is quite a sad thing... The problem with success, although it's fantastic, is that every new person who sees the Borat movie is one less person who I can get with Borat again... It's upsetting but the success has been great and better than anyone would have dreamed of. But there's a lot of other characters that I'm developing.

Were your parents disappointed when you decided to become an actor?

They were disappointed, obviously. They wanted me to be a lawyer and they said, "You could do acting in the evenings" (laughter) but now, they're all right. They're slightly less disappointed now.

Your bathing suit in "Borat" was memorable and so is your tight spandex pants in this movie. Do you enjoy showing off?

A lot of actors put on weight for a role. I put on three inches for this one (laughter). I got very, very excited during some of the scenes, as you can see (laughter). Having Johnny Depp around was clearly inspirational. I worked with this brilliant costume designer, Colleen Atwood, and we were going through what the character should look like. We contemplated having him as a really fat guy. Then we moved toward having him more as a toreador. If you notice, bullfighters have very tight spandex trousers. As you say in Spanish, "*Cojones con melones* (laughter)."

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.

Another 'Deal,' for charity

THREE CELEBRITY CONTEStants who failed to win the grand prize in "Deal or No Deal" have been invited again to try their luck in the game show.

The last time they played, Roderick Paulate, Efren "Bata" Reyes and Marc Leviste took home P1 each. The show's producers decided they deserved a second go, having vowed to donate their winnings to charity.

Leviste, a former aspiring actor and now Batangas vice governor, says he would turn over whatever he wins to Bantay Bata and World Vision.

Bantay Bata helps abused and sick children. World Vision provides scholarship to indigent but deserving youth.

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THE KINGDOM R13 12:10,2:40,5:10, 7:40,10:10	DEATH PROOF R13 1:30,3:40,5:50,8:00	ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE PG13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

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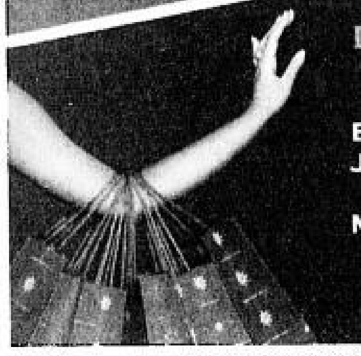

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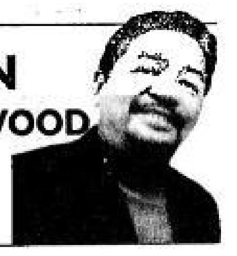
From Borat to Pirelli, Sacha Baron Cohen is quite ballsy



ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD
Ruben V. Nepales

Was it his tight pants or an opera singer that helped him reach a high note in his latest movie?

SACHA Baron Cohen, the man behind Borat and Pirelli, gets flowers and a monkey toy for his newborn baby with actress Isla Fisher.

PHOTO BY RUBEN V. NEPALES

LOS ANGELES—"I'M SORRY. His balls were caught in the elevator so I'm here instead."

That's how Sacha Baron Cohen replied when asked why he did not come to this recent press con in LA as Signor Pirelli in the film adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's musical, "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street." The movie is vying for four Golden Globe Awards, including Best Picture-Comedy or Musical.

Pirelli, the flamboyant Italian barber in anatomically graphic spandex pants, is the latest incarnation of the man who played Borat (the Kazakhstani journalist), Ali G (the moronic gangsta wannabe) and Bruno (the Austrian fashionista—coming to the big screen) in films and TV shows.

"I prefer to be in character but unfortunately, getting into the character of Pirelli would have required a number of people and the shipping of my balls as well," added Sacha, who spoke to us completely in his most popular character, Borat, costume and all, last year. But even as himself—although he was still trying to hide somewhat behind glasses and a cap—Sacha was hilarious, as you can already imagine with those opening quips. In fact, the bawdy lines came across as funnier since these were almost unexpected from someone looking so preppy and normal in sweaters, checkered shirt and jeans.

"Do I sit or do I stand? I lie down? Where do I take my clothes off?" he asked, eliciting more laughter. He graciously accepted a bouquet of flowers and a big monkey toy for Olive, his October-born daughter. Even Olive's mother, his fiancée, Australian actress Isla Fisher, was not spared from Sacha's humor. When an Australian colleague greeted Sacha with "You have quite a big to-do with an Aussie—the mother of your child, right?" he quickly replied, "Oh yes, so she claims."

WHAT tight pants can do. Sacha Baron Cohen (center) hit that high note in his song, thanks to the tight, anatomically graphic pants he wore, according to "Sweeney Todd" director Tim Burton. But Sacha disclosed his secret musical weapon in the interview.

Really sleazy

The Golden Globe award-winning actor for "Borat" asked each one of us to say from what country we're from as we stood up to ask him a question. To a journalist who said, "I am from Germany," he quipped, "I am sorry about that." He asked, "Will you stand up?" More laughter because the reporter was already standing up.

A male writer's mane did not escape his amused attention: "Did you always have that hairstyle or was that since Borat (laughter)? I appreciate that—I'm glad you came as me."

The great Stephen Sondheim, interviewed earlier in London, said of Sacha as the rival barber of Johnny Depp's Sweeney Todd: "He's a really sleazy Pirelli which we've never had before on the stage. And he is sinister, too. (Spoiler alert) It was a great pleasure to see him die (end spoiler alert). Pirelli has always been played by a tenor. Sacha is a baritone but he was able to give the flavor of a tenor. The whole idea was a take-off on an Italian tenor singing, a man showing off his voice. It's wonderful that Sacha sings it all in that baritone voice and then on the last note, he goes way into the stratosphere—he goes into this pretentious falsetto. That was really funny."

Rather small part

The legendary musical stage composer added, "I also loved the fact that he used the Italian flag as a bib. That was not my idea—it was his. I wish I had thought of it."

Director Tim Burton also shared his take on the Cambridge-educated actor: "He had just come off 'Borat' so for him to choose this, kind of a small part, it really made for something special on the film. He's not just funny; he can do different accents. And the suit was tight. That's why he was able to hit that high note (laughter)."

Here are excerpts of our press con with the man who reportedly asked "Sweeney Todd's" costume designer to insert manhood-enhancing material into his tight trousers.

Can you talk about what the past year was like? Seems it was quite a heady one for you.

Winning a Golden Globe was an incredible evening in my life. I am still nursing the hangover (laughter) and it really transformed things. That award led to offers from Tim Burton and other directors so it broke me out from being a pure comedian into something a bit larger. People are categorized as either comedians or actors. It was an amazing opportunity to have people think, oh, there was a performance involved behind Borat because people assumed that I was Ali G or I was Borat and that there was no acting involved. More so because for a time, I never came out behind the mask. So that awards night was a transforming experience for me. I got drunk and nine months later, you saw what happened (laughter).

Who taught you shaving lessons for this role?

When I was doing Ali G, I had my own barber who shaved my beard. I hosted the MTV Awards once and we had all the big rappers, including Jay-Z who had an entourage of about 30 people. He said, "Wait a minute. Who's this guy?" I go, "This guy just shaves my beard." He goes, "He does your hair too?" I said, "No, he just shaves my beard." He became incredibly jealous because this rapper with an entourage of 30 people didn't have his own beard trimmer (laughter). So everyone was trying to poach my guy. He was the guy who gave me shaving lessons. He's a Sicilian guy who used to shave the local Mafia. He has been shaving from the age of six—he stood on a chair—so I knew he was trustworthy.

And did you take singing lessons?

I arrived in London the day before I started shooting. I realized that I needed singing lessons because I didn't really know how to use my voice. I foolishly called my mother and said, "Could you find a good singing teacher?" So she looked in the Yellow Pages (laughter) and she gave me the address of this woman. So I turned up and this woman opens the door. She said (in a high-pitched, ultra-chirpy woman's voice), "Hello, can I help you?" I go, "My name's Sacha Baron Cohen." And she said, "I was expecting you to be a girl (laughter)." She goes, "What's the musical?" I go, "Sweeney Todd." She goes, "Never heard of it." I said, "It's starring Johnny Depp." She said, "Who's he?" (laughter) I said, "He's an actor, you know 'Pirates of the Caribbean,' 'Sleepy Hollow.'" "No, no, never heard of him. Who's directing?" I go, "Tim Burton." She goes, "Oh, no, never heard of him. New man, is he? Could I have his telephone number because I often have these local concerts? We're looking for somebody to direct."

So I started singing Pirelli to her and she goes "Oh, no, no, you don't do it like that." It was the first time she had even seen the music and yet she goes, "You have to do this (in an operatic woman's voice and florid singing style): 'I am Pirelli'... and then you take your hat off and do a twirl.'" So she basically became the new director (laughter) of "Sweeney Todd." I ignored everything she said.

You must have heard good things about Johnny Depp before working with him. What impression did he leave on you?

I had heard of Johnny. I knew he played a sailor in a film (laughter). I heard he was going to be a hairdresser in a movie called "Sweeney Todd." He's a true master of his art. With someone like Tim Burton, who requires detail and a total precision in the craft, Johnny has that. He can replicate a perfect performance 15 times. That's the first time I've ever seen someone able to do that. He's one of the biggest stars in the world, if not the biggest star. But he's incredibly humble. (Spoiler alert.) In the scene where he was murdering me, after each take, he'd be the first one to come over with a little bowl so I could spit out the fake blood (End alert). He treats everyone with total respect and is probably one of the most grounded persons I've ever met.

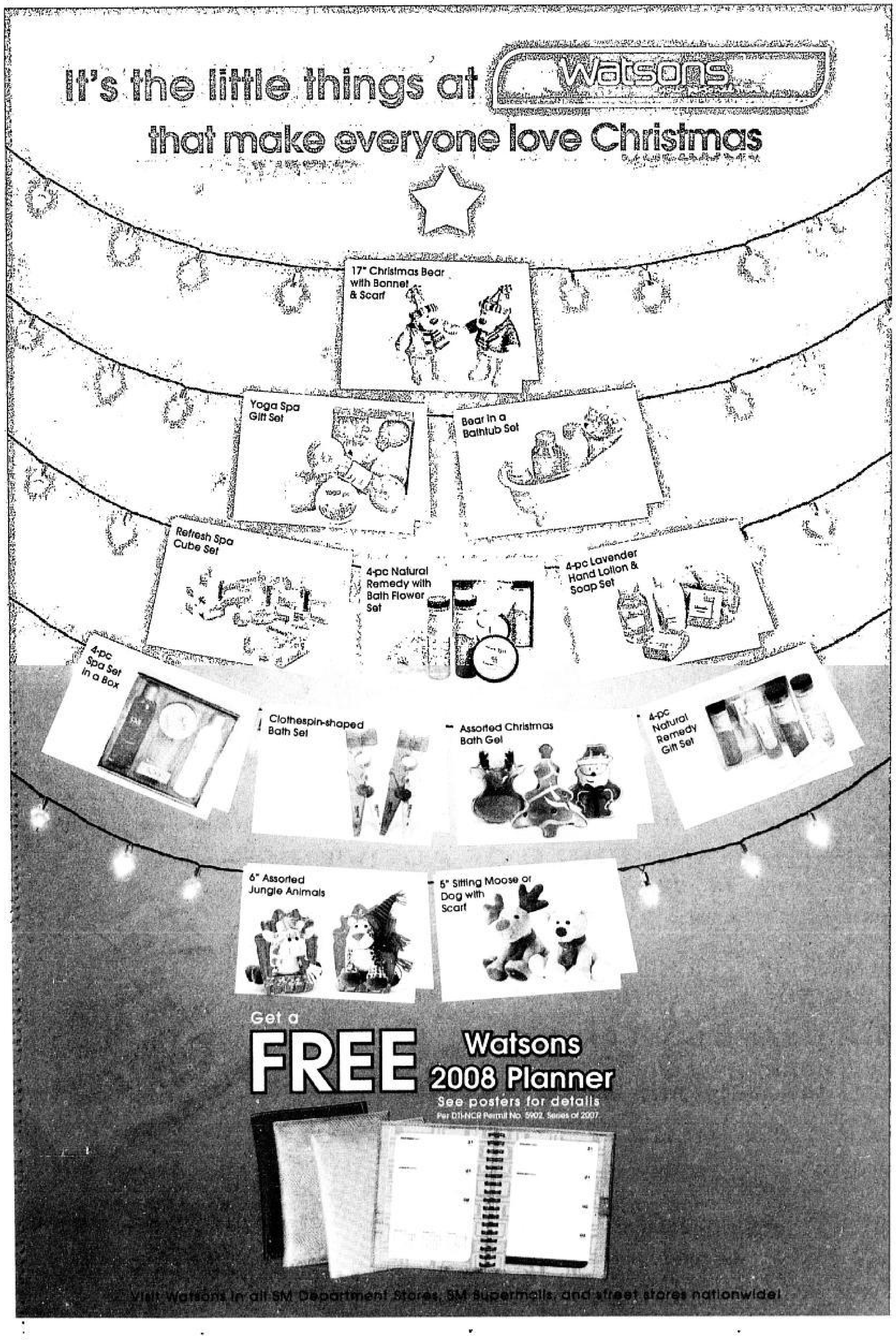
Johnny's character is driven by revenge. Are you also the type who likes to get even?

Not really. But since last year, I have been sued (for "Borat") by about 3,000 people (laughter). Everyone wanted to get even with me but these letters are unusual. I was informed by the lawyers that I'm about to be sued by someone for $100,000 and then the letter says at the end, "P.S. I loved the movie (laughter). Can you sign a poster for my son, Jeremy?"

Tim told us that you virtually sang the whole score of "Fiddler on the Roof" during your audition. Can you talk about that moment from your perspective and how you reached that high note in your song in the movie?

Tim said that Sondheim needed to hear all of us sing before we were actually given the parts. The only thing I remembered was that when I was in college, I played Tevye in "Fiddler on the Roof." So I came in and sang "If I Were A Rich Man." That wasn't enough so he asked me to sing five other songs from "Fiddler." Luckily, Sondheim thought they were okay.

FROM BORAT/ K3



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DID YOU KNOW...

Taye Diggs goes caroling

VIOLET, LOUISIANA—ACTOR TAYE DIGGS SPENT TIME SINGING carols Monday night in a place where the Christmas spirit is coming back: hard-hit St. Bernard Parish. Diggs joined a gospel choir and New Orleans singer Irma Thomas in a Violet neighborhood where many people are still living in trailers 27 months after Hurricane Katrina. "It's an eye-opener," said Diggs about the destruction. As much as you hear on the news, it's completely different when you see it firsthand. *AP*

BOOKS

SNOOKY SERNA and daughter SACHI

I'M A BIG FAN OF GRAPHIC NOVEList Neil Gaiman's work, especially his "Sandman: Master of Dreams." I'm into dark and gothic stories. Gaiman is arguably the best writer of that genre. I met him three years ago at his book-signing. I even had my picture taken with him. I was also around when he visited the country early this year. "Sandman" is a comic book series of ethereal figures. Its lead character, Morpheus, the lord of dreams, is captured but escapes in the modern day to rebuild his fallen kingdom. It's a nice read. I find it very interesting. *Marinel R. Cruz*

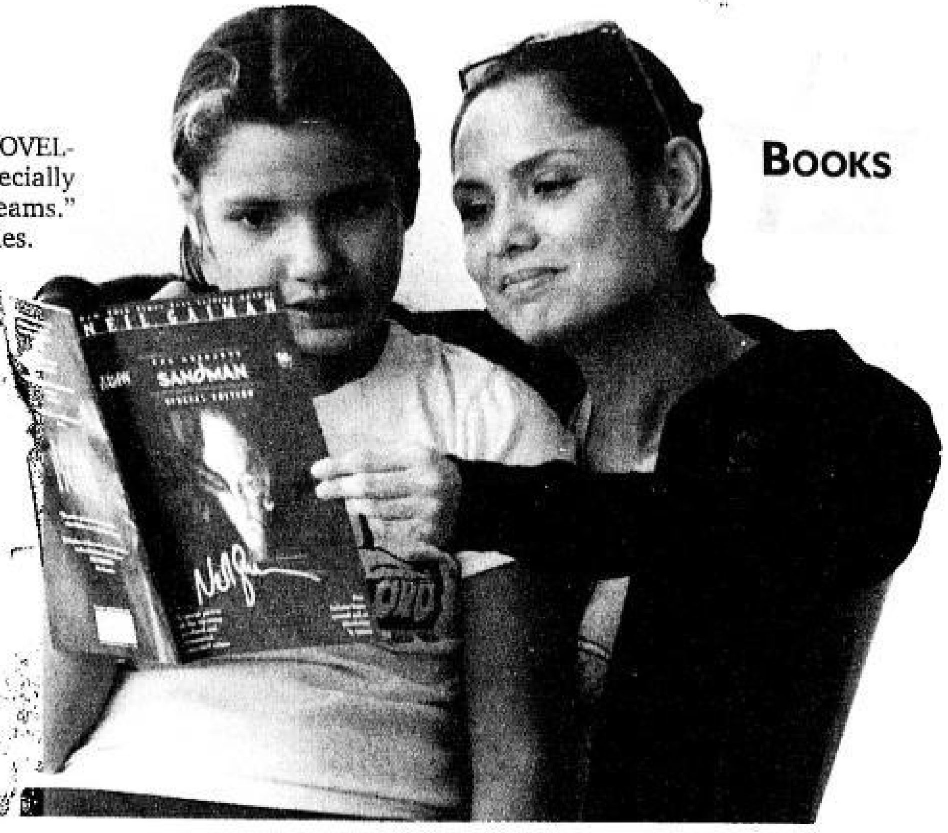


PHOTO BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Preggy li'l sis

JAMIE Lynn Spears and big sister Britney, far right, watch the NBA game between the Washington Wizards and Los Angeles Lakers in LA in this file photo. Jamie Lynn, 16, who stars as a schoolgirl in Nickelodeon's popular TV show "Zoey 101," is pregnant. The cable channel has confirmed the report. REUTERS

TAIL TALES

ROBERT SEÑA

ZACH, A LABRADOR, IS 7 YEARS OLD. MY KIDS call him Lolo because he seems to have forgotten everything he learned from obedience school. He now does his poo-poo wherever he wants. We feel bad that we hardly spend any more time with him because Isay (Alvarez, his wife) and I are always at work and the kids are in school. Whenever we get home, Zach would run to us as if saying, "Hey guys! You adopted me. Aren't you supposed to play with me?" *Marinel R. Cruz*

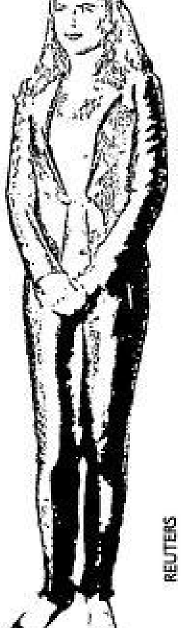
PHOTO BY ROMY HOMILLADA

ISAY ALVAREZ

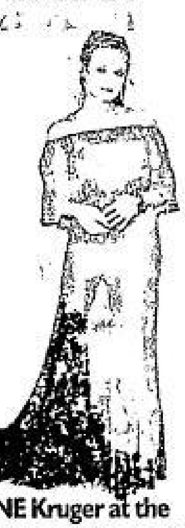
OUR TURTLE HAS NO NAME. IT HAS ALWAYS been called The Turtle. Taking care of a turtle is not so difficult. We just feed it with turtle pellet. *Malakas kumain ito, sobra*. There was a time when we were so preoccupied with renovating a part of the house that we forgot all about it. We didn't feed it for three months. Surprisingly, it's still alive. It's good to have the turtle live in the small pond inside the house; it eats all the mosquitoes. *Marinel R. Cruz*

PHOTO BY ROMY HOMILLADA

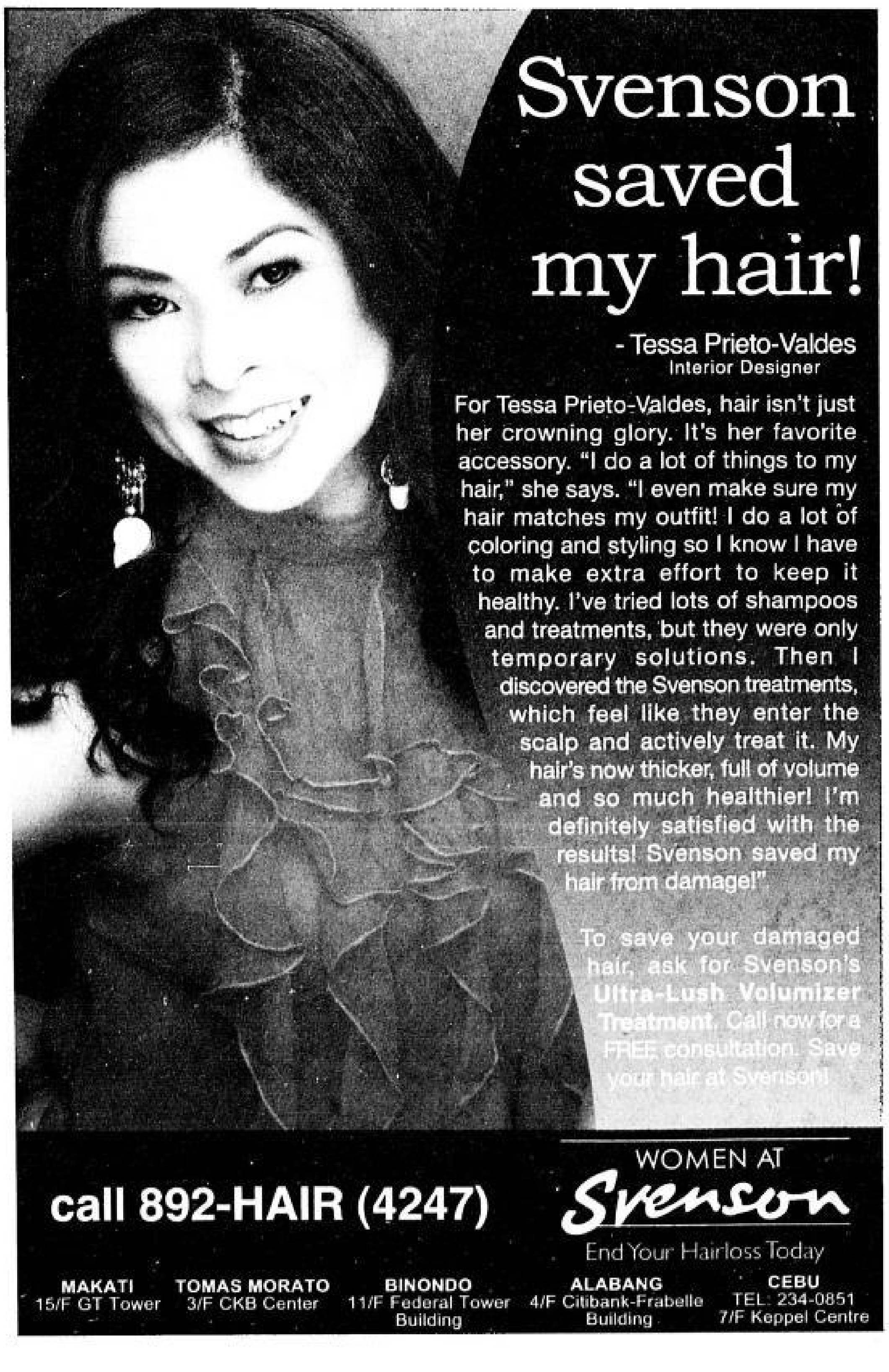
RED CARPET


REUTERS

NICOLE **Kidman at the premiere of "Golden Compass" in Sydney, Australia**


DIANE **Kruger at the premiere of "National Treasure: Book Of Secrets" in New York**

REUTERS


Svenson saved my hair!

- Tessa Prieto-Valdes
Interior Designer

For Tessa Prieto-Valdes, hair isn't just her crowning glory. It's her favorite accessory. "I do a lot of things to my hair," she says. "I even make sure my hair matches my outfit! I do a lot of coloring and styling so I know I have to make extra effort to keep it healthy. I've tried lots of shampoos and treatments, but they were only temporary solutions. Then I discovered the Svenson treatments, which feel like they enter the scalp and actively treat it. My hair's now thicker, full of volume and so much healthier! I'm definitely satisfied with the results! Svenson saved my hair from damage!"

To save your damaged hair, ask for Svenson's **Ultra-Lush Volumizer Treatment**. Call now for a FREE consultation. Save your hair at Svenson!

call 892-HAIR (4247)

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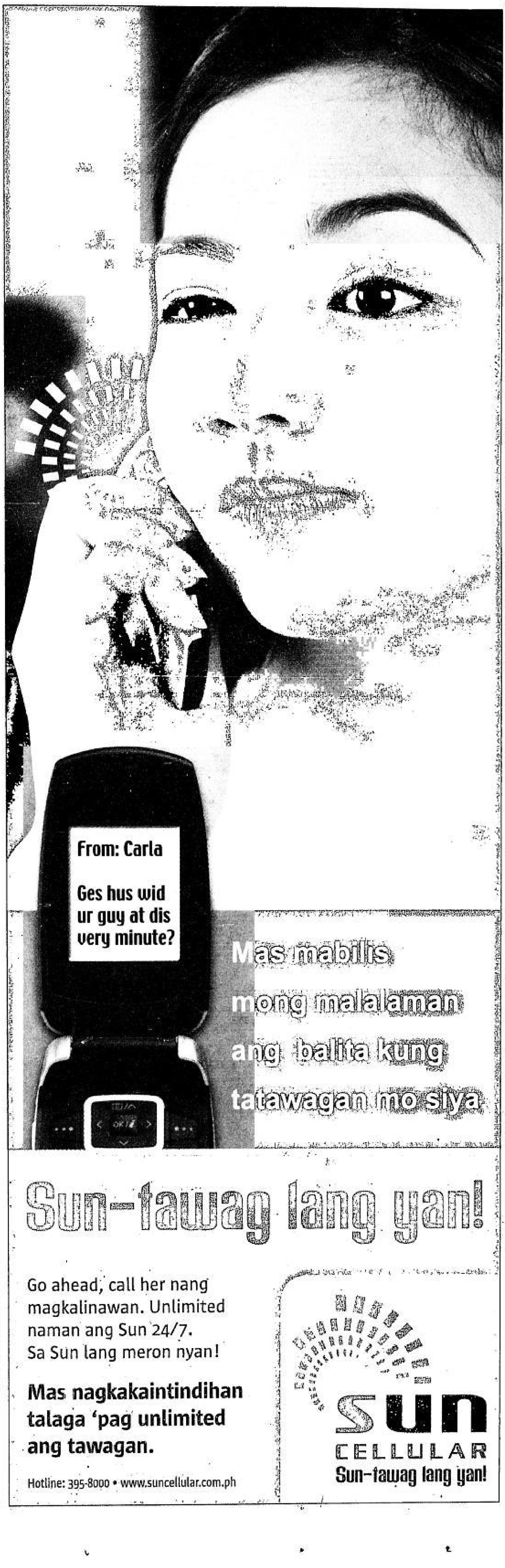
BINONDO 11/F Federal Tower Building
ALABANG 4/F Citibank-Frabelle Building
CEBU TEL: 234-0851 7/F Keppel Centre


From: Carla

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Sun-tawag lang yan!

AMY PEREZ

BEFORE THE BATHROOM WAS RENOVATED, THE BATH TUB used to be my favorite spot in the house. But now, I spend most of my time in the area where my laptop is—the bedroom on the second floor. That's where I write my newspaper column and check my mail. When I'm not feeling well, it's also where I have supper.

Marinel R. Cruz

PHOTO BY AUGUST DELA CRUZ

FAVORITE NOOKS

MONTANO GIRLS

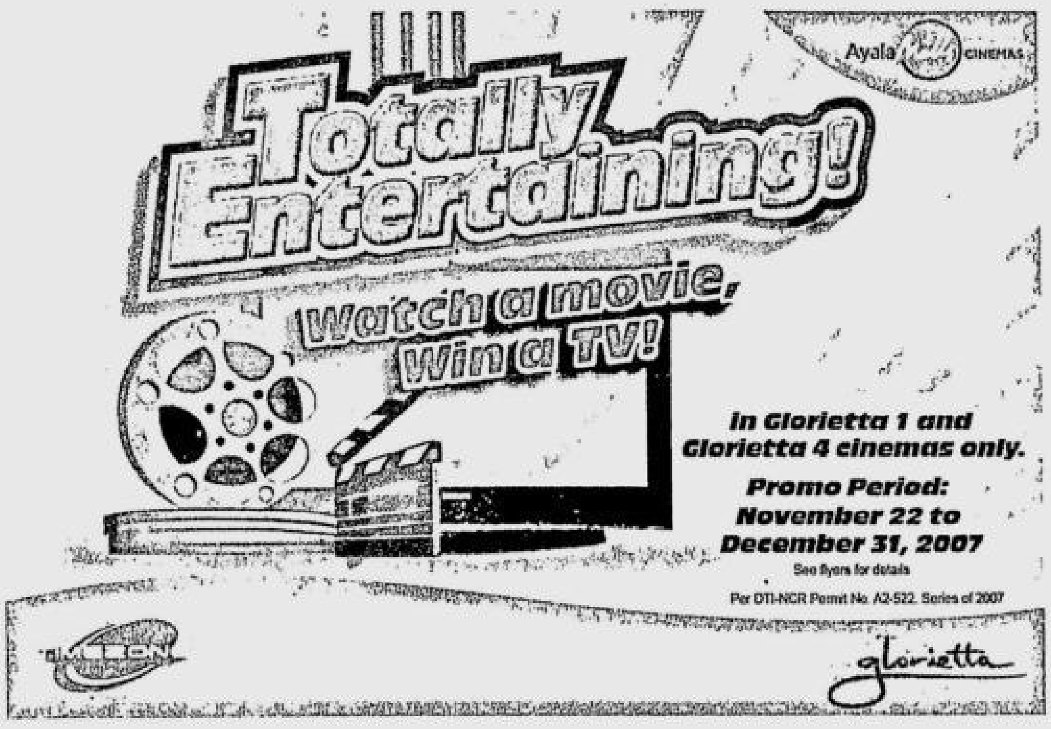
Angelina Isabelle
Samantha Angelene (3)
Angel Franchesca (2)

ACCORDING TO SUNS
Cruz: "This Christmas tr
been with Buboy (husbar
sar Montano) and me sin
got married seven years
has lasted this long bec
always see to it that it's
in a big box. I just try
grade or change the orna
every year. Sometimes w
cy all red. This year, it's al
Our kids, especially the
were excited in decorati
tree. They kept saying; "
as we hung the decoratio
Christmas Eve, after h
midnight Mass with the
their *yayas* and our sta
usually have *noche bue*
home. Buboy helps in co
and setting the table.
year, our Christmas is a
special. My wish is for my
ly to spend a hundred
Christmases together! My
band took this photo of o
Marias in our Quezon
home, while I played the
mom."

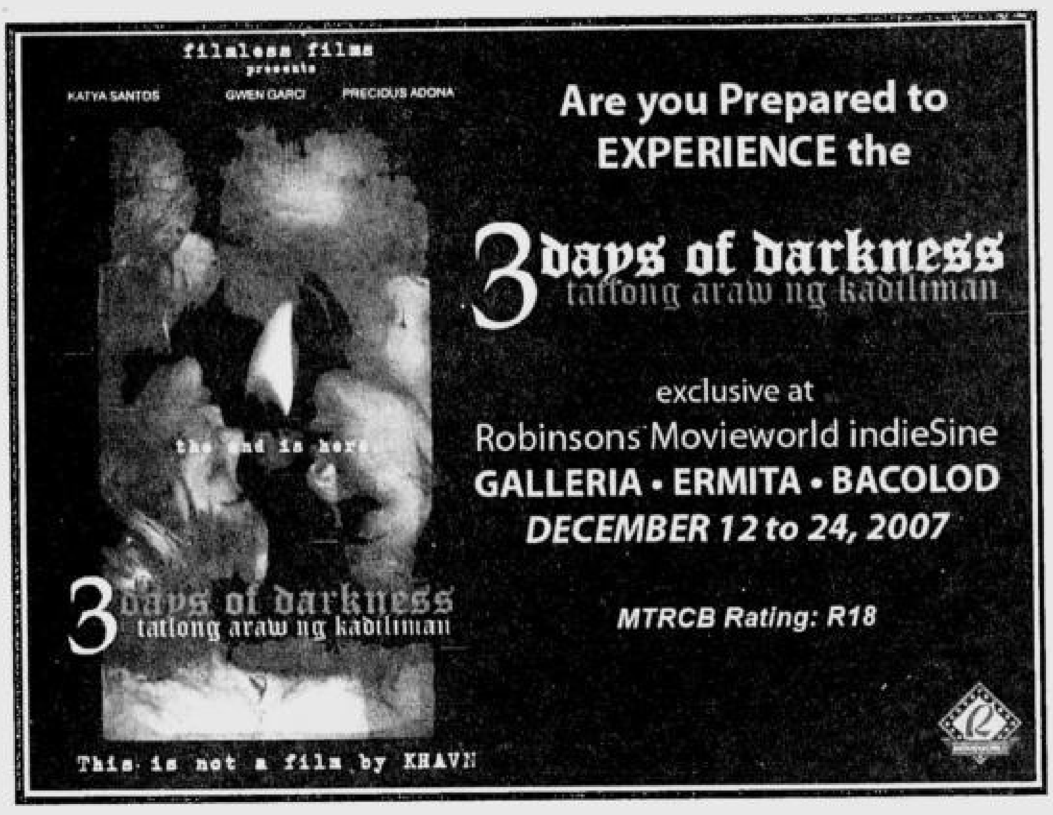
Bayani San Di

PHOTO BY CESAR M

The THX experience.
Giving you more than the front seat.
A unique cinematic experience from the largest THX certified theatre operator in the country Ayala Malls Cinemas
THX
Ayala Malls CINEMAS



Ayala Malls CINEMAS
Totally Entertaining!
Watch a movie, Win a TV!
In Glorietta 1 and Glorietta 4 cinemas only.
Promo Period: November 22 to December 31, 2007
See flyers for details
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-522. Series of 2007
glorietta



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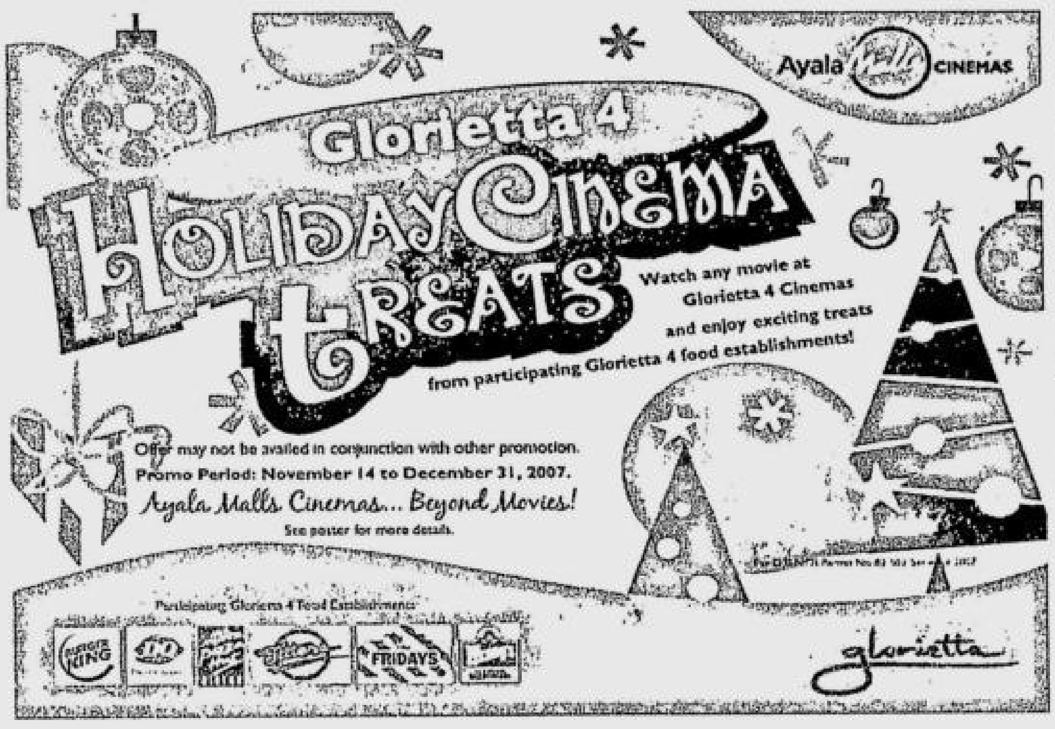
KATYA SANTOS GWEN GARCI PRECIOUS ADONA
Are you Prepared to EXPERIENCE the
3 days of darkness
tatlong araw ng kadiliman
exclusive at
Robinsons Movieworld indieSine
GALLERIA • ERMITA • BACOLOD
DECEMBER 12 to 24, 2007
MTRCB Rating: R18
the end is here.
3 days of darkness
tatlong araw ng kadiliman
This is not a film by KHAVN



Ayala Malls CINEMAS
Glorietta 4
Holiday Cinema Treats
Watch any movie at Glorietta 4 Cinemas and enjoy exciting treats from participating Glorietta 4 food establishments!
Offer may not be availed in conjunction with other promotion.
Promo Period: November 14 to December 31, 2007.
Ayala Malls Cinemas... Beyond Movies!
See poster for more details.
Participating Glorietta 4 Food Establishments
glorietta

AT THE CINEMAS

THX

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

GLORIETTA 1	1 DEATH PROOF	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 BATANES	4 HITMAN			
GLORIETTA 4	1 ENCHANTED	2 THE KINGDOM	3 THX ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 DEATH PROOF	5 GONE BABY GONE	6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	7 MARTIAN CHILD
GREENBELT 1	1 MARTIAN CHILD	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS					
GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	3 MARTIAN CHILD GUARANTEED SEATS	4 GONE BABY GONE GUARANTEED SEATS	5 ENCHANTED GUARANTEED SEATS		
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 MARTIAN CHILD	4 GONE BABY GONE	5 ENCHANTED		
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE GAME PLAN	3 FRED CLAUS	4 LUST CAUTION			
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 ENCHANTED	3 MARTIAN CHILD	4 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE	5 THE KINGDOM		
TRINOMA • THX Certified • All-Digital Sound • All-Stadium Seating • Computerized Ticketing System • Recliner Seats	1 BATANES	2 DEATH PROOF	3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 MARTIAN CHILD GUARANTEED SEATS	5 ENCHANTED	6 FRED CLAUS	7 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS

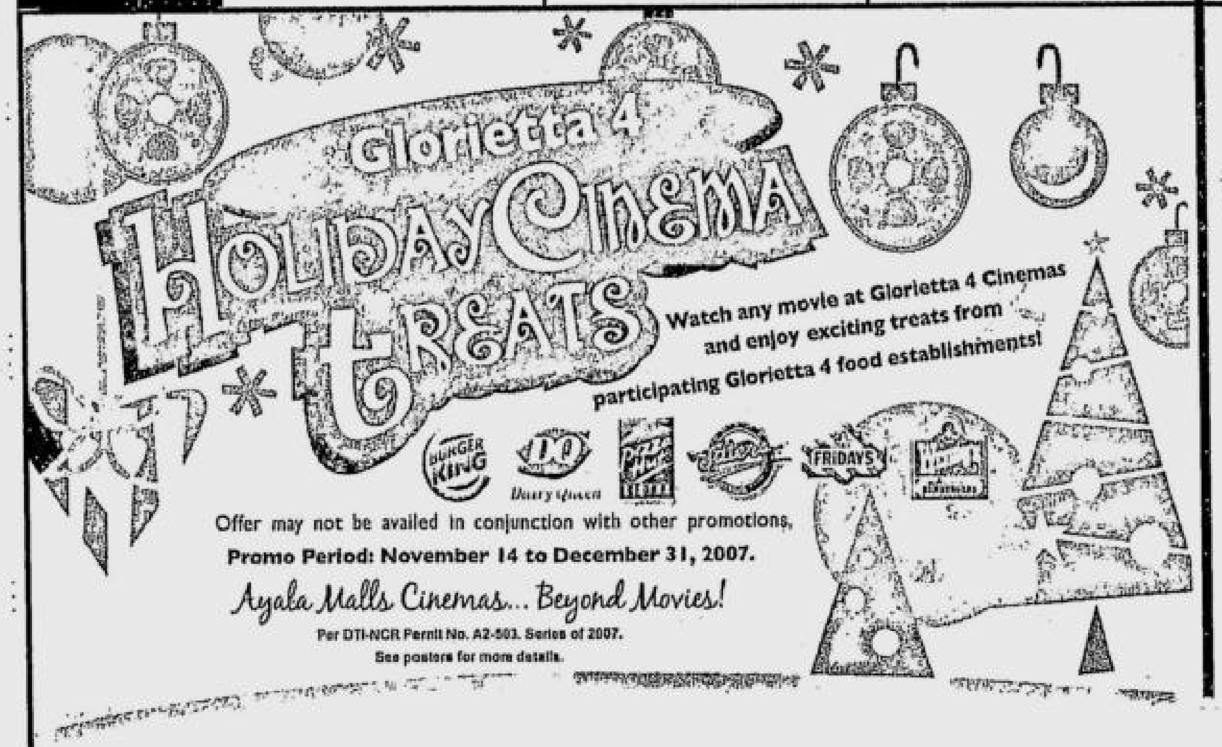
AT THE MALLS

CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS:

Glorietta - 752 7272
Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

Ayala Malls

glorietta	Taylor Hicks Live! December 18; 7pm; Glorietta 4 Park
GREENBELT	Taylor Hicks Live! December 19; 7pm; Greenbelt 3 Park
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Christian Bautista Live! December 22; 6pm; Town Plaza
AYALA CENTER CEBU	Christmas Chorale featuring Akafellas December 22; 7pm; Activity Center
MARKET! MARKET!	Japan Foundation Karate Demonstration December 18; 6pm; Activity Center
Greenbelt Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE January 11 to 27, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com
Ayala MUSEUM	WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso November 24 to January 13, 2008; Ground Floor Gallery For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
TriNoma	Taylor Hicks Live! December 20; 7pm; Activity Center FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase. See leaflets for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-938, Series of 2007 December 1 to 31



Glorietta 4
Holiday Cinema Treats
Watch any movie at Glorietta 4 Cinemas and enjoy exciting treats from participating Glorietta 4 food establishments!
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Ayala Malls Cinemas... Beyond Movies!
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-503. Series of 2007.
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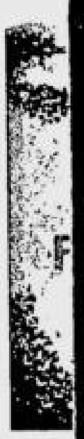
Teens & Kids Zone
Now Open
3rd Level, Glorietta 3

KIDS
Baby Couture Diaper
Babyland
Basics for Kids
Beagle House
Big & Small
Chicco
Cuts for Tots
Enfant
Gift Gate
Gingersnaps
Kandy & Karen
Kids of Bayo
Maxi Bear
Meet My Feet
Orange Juice
OshKosh B'Gosh
Papemelroti
Pink Box
Spin
Think Pink
Toytown

TEENS
Adidas
All Boxed Up
American Boulevard
Astrovision
Bayo
Blued
Blue Star
Buffalo
Converse
DM Store
Folded & Hung
Francesco
Hang Ten
Kamiseta
Lee
Nike Stadium
Petit Monde
Plains & Prints
Replay
Soda
Fern
Studio AK
Tomato
Whoops
X
YRYS

SPECIALTY
Ang Gara
Bead Shop
Candy Corner
Cindy Carol
Color Stone
Courtside
Cubes
Filbars
Gift Factory
Girl Stuff
Island Life
i2i
Mallos
MCKY
Must Have
Scrap It
Spoofs
Swell Stuff
Unisilver
Vente
Whimsy

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! TriNoma



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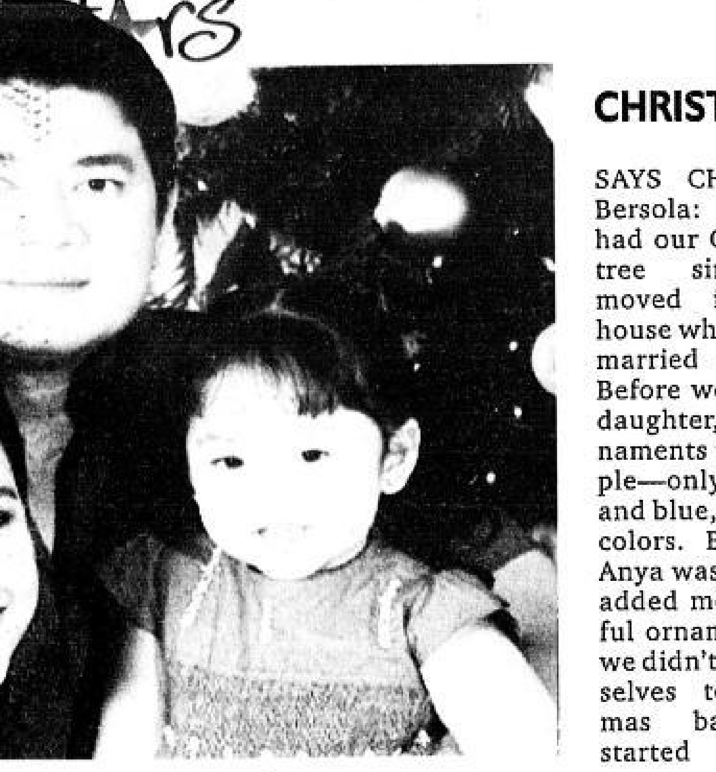

CHRISTINE BERSOLA, JULIUS BABAO AND ANYA BABAO

SAYS CHRISTINE Bersola: "We've had our Christmas tree since we moved into our house when we got married in 2003. Before we had our daughter, our ornaments were simple—only silver and blue, no bright colors. But when Anya was born, we added more colorful ornaments and we didn't limit ourselves to Christmas balls. We started hanging toys, teddy bears and other small but vibrant trinkets on the tree. See how having a child can change your tree! Anya now helps us hang the décor. We have a new tradition. Every time we buy a new ornament, we write down the year on it. We will do it every year until Anya and our future kids are grown up. Or until the tree falls down because of the heavy ornaments."

Bayani San Diego Jr.

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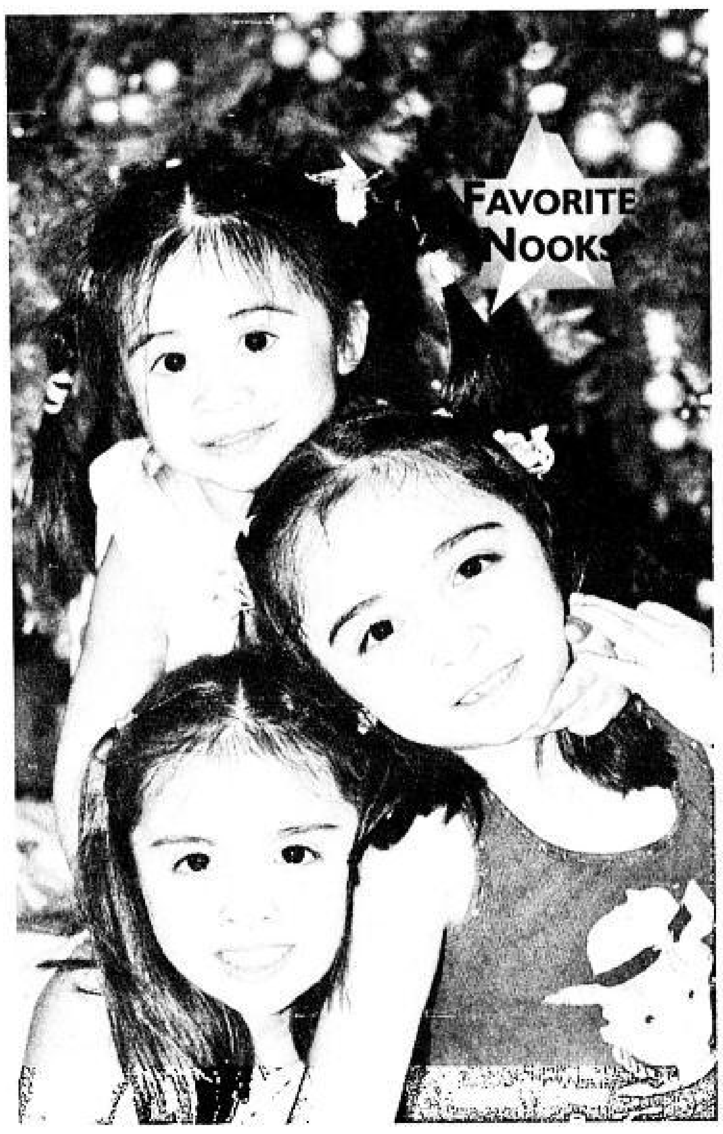
ONTANO


FAVORITE
NOOKS

AVORITE
NOOKS

EN DAVILA

F MY FAVORITE NOOKS IN THE HOUSE IS THE AREA WHERE THE
helf is. This spot is special to me. I collect all of the books of the Philippine
for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ). I also have a lot of files of News-
I have several books about homes, too. But I don't store all of them here.
oks kept on this shelf are only the ones that I feel are necessary.

Marinel R. Cruz
PHOTO BY ROMY HOMILLADA

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 ENCHANTED
MTRCB GP
1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

3 KINGDOM
MTRCB R-13
1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30

2 HAIRSPRAY
MTRCB. GP

4 GOLDEN COMPASS
MTRCB PG-13
1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30

PREMIERE THEATRE — FRED CLAUS / ELIZABETH
MTRCB: GP / PG-13

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

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Avail the Shang Cineplex E-see Club Giftcards.
The Perfect Giftcard for the Holiday Season!
Its a gift your family and friends will surely appreciate.
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EDSA corner Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Call 633-2227 or 633-4735
for more details.

Shangri-La Plaza

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aranetacenter.net
Gateway
Ali MALL
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Farmers Market

Gateway CINEPLEX*10
EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE
Globe PLATINUM CINEMA

ELIZABETH 1:05 | 3:55 6:45 | 9:30	MARTIAN CHILD 2:30 | 4:50 7:10 | 9:30	DEATH PROOF 12:50 | 5:10 | 9:30	GOLDEN COMPASS 2:00 | 4:30 7:00 | 9:30	ELIZABETH 3:20 | 9:00 GOLDEN COMPASS 12:50 | 6:10
BATANES 4:50 | 9:30 CATACOMB 2:30 | 7:10	ONE MORE CHANCE 12:45 | 3:40 6:35 | 9:30	THE KINGDOM 12:10 | 4:50 | 9:30	PASUKOB 3:00 | 7:20 BEOWULF 2:25 | 7:05	ENCHANTED 1:45 | 4:20 6:55 | 9:30

COMPLETELY UNOBSTRUCTED VIEWS
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

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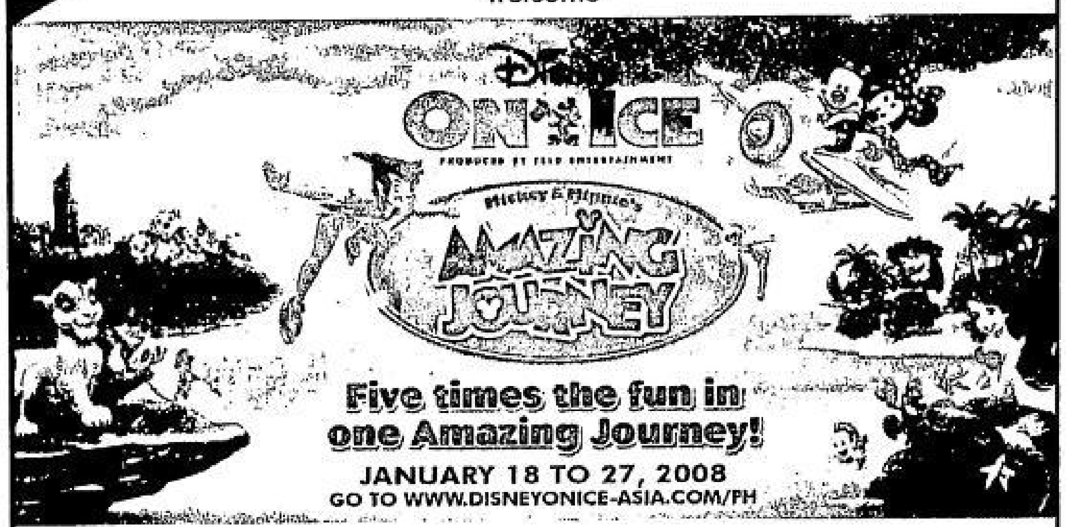
THE MUST-SEE SHOW OF THE YEAR!

LIVE!
Araneta Center & Globe
welcome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Mickey & Minnie's
AMAZING JOURNEY

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JANUARY 18 TO 27, 2008
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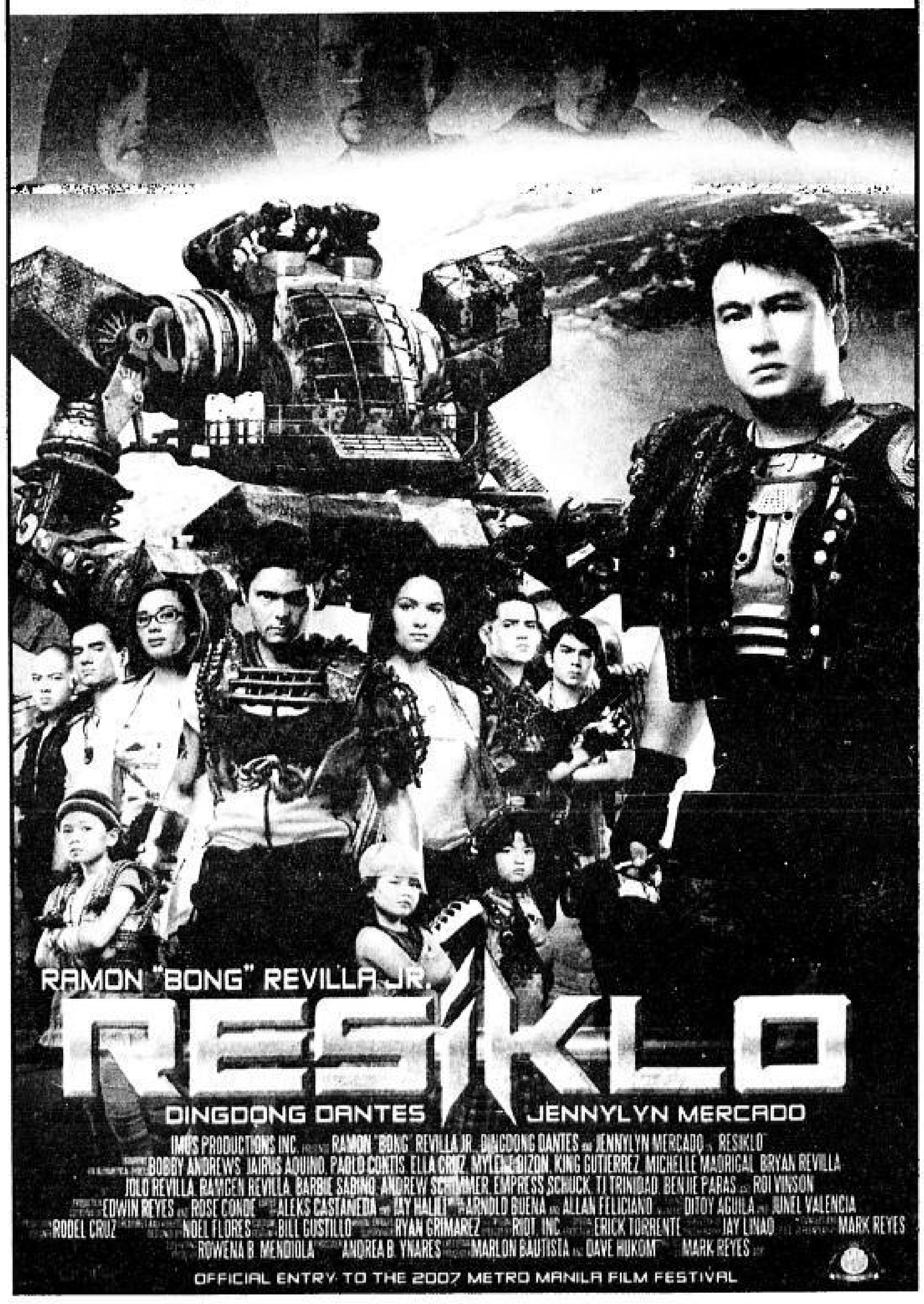
OPENS DECEMBER 26
PREMIER NIGHT DECEMBER 22, SATURDAY 7:30 P.M.
AT SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 9 & 10


RAMON "BONG" REVILLA JR.
RESIKLO
DINGDONG DANTES
JENNYLYN MERCADO
IMUS PRODUCTIONS INC. RAMON "BONG" REVILLA JR. DINGDONG DANTES JENNYLYN MERCADO "RESIKLO"
BOBBY ANDREWS JAIRUS AQUINO PAOLO CONTIS ELLA CRUZ MYLENE DIZON KING GUTIERREZ MICHELLE MADRIGAL BRYAN REVILLA
JOLO REVILLA RAMGEN REVILLA BARBIE SABINO ANDREW SCHIMMER EMPRESS SCHUCK TJ TRINIDAD BENJIE PARAS ROI VINSON
EDWIN REYES ROSE CONDE ALEKS CASTANEDA JAY HALILI ARNOLD BUENA ALLAN FELICIANO DITOY AGUILA JUNEL VALENCIA
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MMTA
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THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 (DOLBY) ENCHANTED
2 (DOLBY) HAIRSPRAY
3 (DOLBY) KINGDOM
4 (DOLBY) GOLDEN COMPASS
PREMIERE
FRED CLAUS / ELIZABETH

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
3 THE KINGDOM
4 DEATH PROOF

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268150
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) MARTIAN CHILD
5

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 6433994
1 DEATH PROOF
2 BATANES
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 THE KINGDOM

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan
1 THE KINGDOM
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 PLEASE CALL

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3
4

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 FRED CLAUS / BEOWULF
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 DEATH PROOF / CATACOMBS
4 ENCHANTED
5 MARTIAN CHILD
6 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
7 THE KINGDOM
8 RESERVED
9 ONE MORE CHANCE
10 PASUKOB / BATANES

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) ENCHANTED
2 (DOLBY) BATANES
3 (DOLBY) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 GREEN PARADISE
5 HOOD OF HORROR

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 HITMAN
2 PLEASE CALL
3
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 MARTIAN CHILD
2 DEATH PROOF
3

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 HITMAN
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 RENDITION
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3 HOOD OF HORROR
4 BOOGEY MAN - 2

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 ENCHANTED
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) ENCHANTED
2 (DOLBY) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
4 (DOLBY) THE KINGDOM

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
2 GAME PLAN
3 THE KINGDOM
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 GAME PLAN
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 HITMAN

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 HITMAN / FRED CLAUS
2 THE KINGDOM
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 PLEASE CALL

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 FREAD CLAUS / HITMAN
3 THE KINGDOM

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ENCHANTED

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 PASUKOB
2 HOOD OF HORROR

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 DEATH PROOF
2 GRASYA
3 GREEN PARADISE
4 BALLS OF FURY

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 BALLS OF FURY
2 KIKAY
3 BATANES
4 WILD ORCHID
5 GAME PLAN

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 RENDITION
2 BALLS OF FURY
3 BATANES
4 BEOWULF

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 PLEASE CALL
2

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

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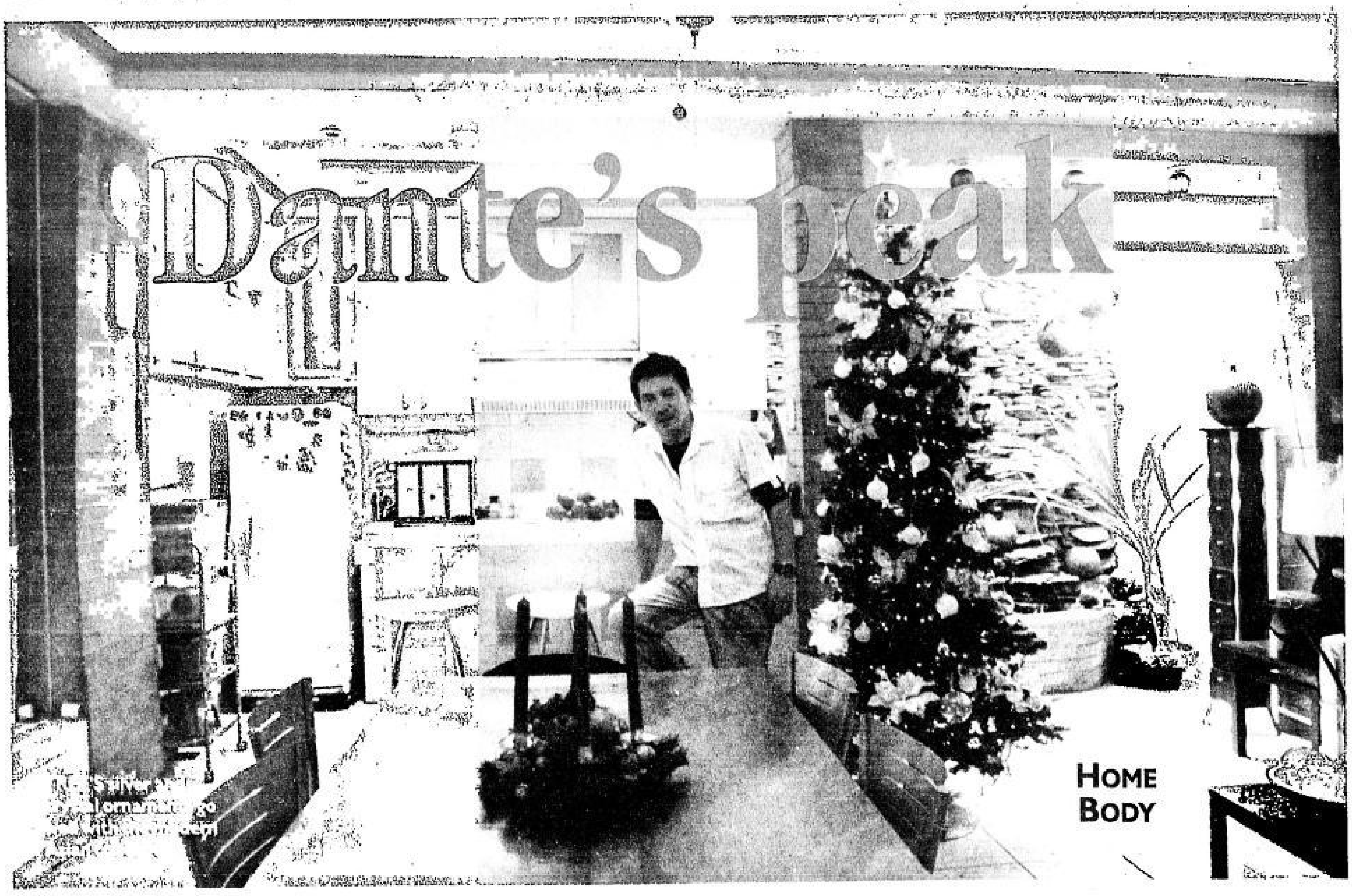
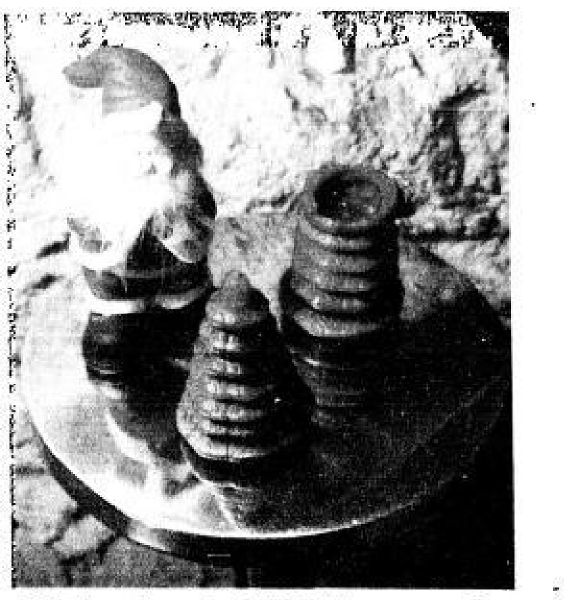
Dante's peak



HOME BODY


SANTA toy is matched with holiday tree candles.

MODERN round chair and antique lamp from Bangkal, Makati, in front of picture window.

DANTE rushed the decor in the viewing room for a Christmas party.

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Romy Homillada

IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS THAT A production designer lives here. Filmmaker Brillante "Dante" Mendoza regards his garden/home in the heart of bustling Mandaluyong as a masterpiece in serenity—an oasis of fine things and creativity, holiday season or not.

Chances are, the casual observer won't notice that the garden was devastated by typhoon Milenyo last year.

"We replaced the wood trellis with a steel structure that will withstand the next storm," Mendoza says. Now, the steel trellis is teeming with red-tipped millionaires' vine—the piece de résistance of Dante's garden.

Therapy

The director often does the gardening himself. It's his therapy, he says. "Touching the soil with my hands has a humbling, soothing effect on me."

From his dad, a businessman-farmer in Pampanga, he inherited his love of greenery.

Dante's next project is to rebuild two nipa huts and the Bali-inspired lounge in front of his mini "Boracay beach." He relates, "The white sand was washed away by Milenyo."

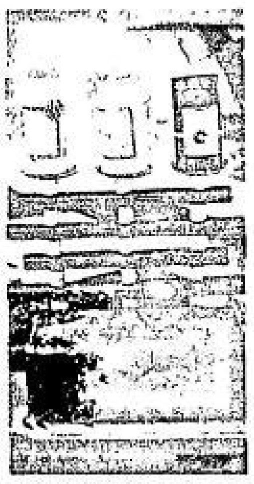
He personally mixed the paint used on the walls of his office/conference room.

Tellingly, in the same way that he takes a hands-on approach in sprucing up his home, he often experiments with colors and the paint brush in his film and commercial shoots.

Dante, who started as production designer on "Private Show" and "Takaw Tukso" in the late 1980s, had a thriving design practice in advertising before making his directorial debut with "Masahista" in 2005.

"I made the Oriental bamboo lamps in 'Masahista,'" he volunteers.

He also crafted the Japanese paper lamp in the conference room—along with several modern works of art in the foyer and main living room.


ORIENTAL candles and candleholder are gifts from friends.

MASKS from Bali

SMILING Buddha mask from Bangkok

Filmmaker Brillante Mendoza considers his garden/home a masterpiece, holiday season or not

TO ADD color to the all-white living room, he added a splash of olive green on the staircase.

He framed fallen leaves, stones, mushrooms, seeds and other found objects, and displayed them in the living room and on the staircase.

His background in Fine Arts (University of Santo Tomas), he says, primed him ... well, not only for his filmmaking career, but also for his hobby as interior decorator.

"Everything I've done in the past was in preparation for my current passions," he points out.

From his numerous travels, he has brought home various masks—from Shanghai, Bali, Bangkok and a prized pair from Venice.

"I've also started collecting refrigerator magnets," he says.

Seems he has also developed the habit of collecting film awards along the way.

Hot on the heels of winning the prize for fiction at the International Environmental Film Festival in Paris for "Foster Child" late last month, he brought home the special jury trophy at the Marrakech International Film Festival in Morocco for "Tirador" on Dec. 15.

The jury, which was headed by filmmaker Milos Forman and included actors John Hurt and Parker Posey, praised "Tirador" for being "energetic and powerful."

Posters galore

The Marrakech honor is his fifth international recognition since winning the Golden Leopard at the Locarno film fest for "Masahista."

All his awards and movie posters, including mementos from this year's Cannes Directors' Fortnight (where "Foster" was screened), are displayed in his home office.

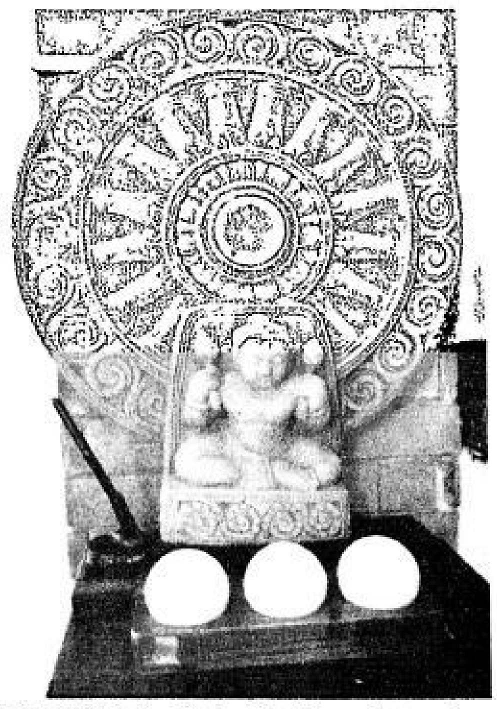
But he seems more pleased with the Christmas décor he has set up with fellow production designer Harley Alcasid. (Alcasid also acted as impromptu lightman for this pictorial.)

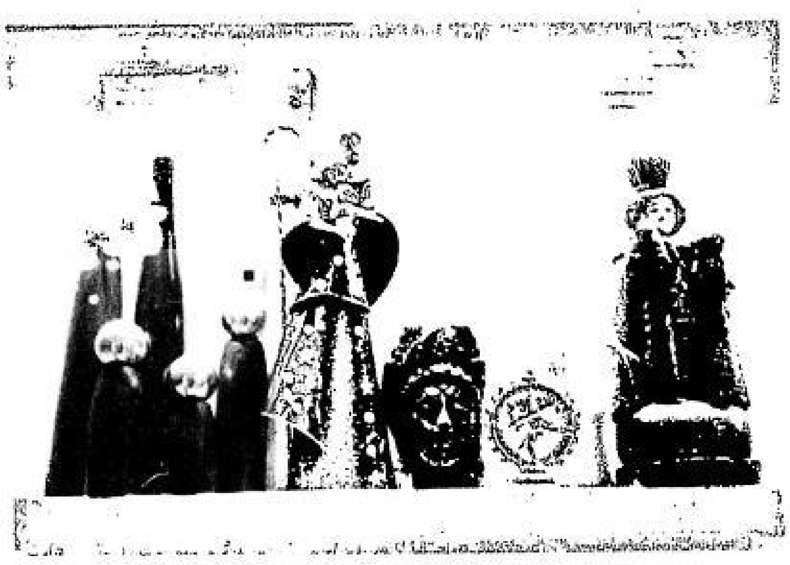
Dante explains: "We rushed the decoration.

Apart from this shoot, we're also preparing for a Christmas party."

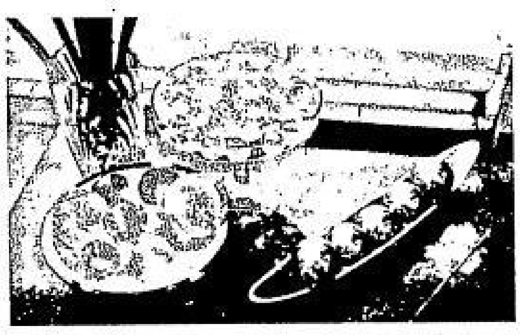
He admits that he feels obliged to pull out all the stops in the holiday season. His silver-studded Christmas tree is complimented by sports crystal balls (from China) strewn all over the living room.

"Because my friends know I'm a production designer by profession, it would be embarrassing not to decorate the house," he says.

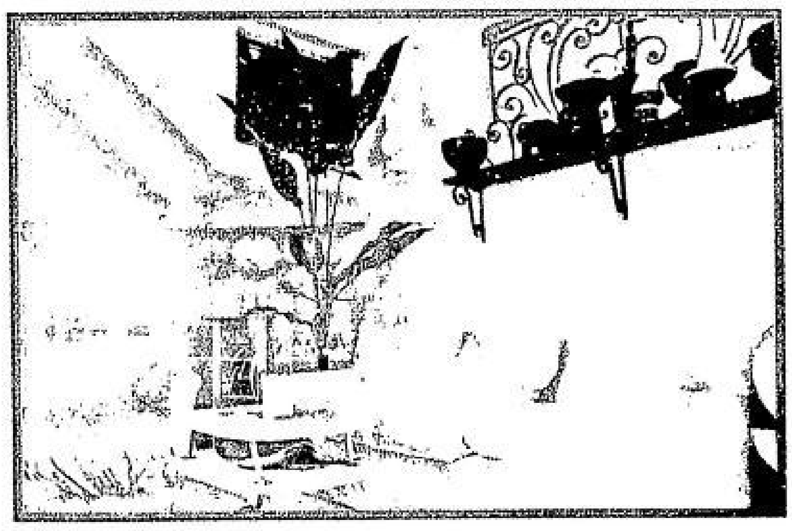

HE FOUND the Sitting Buddha sculpture in India.

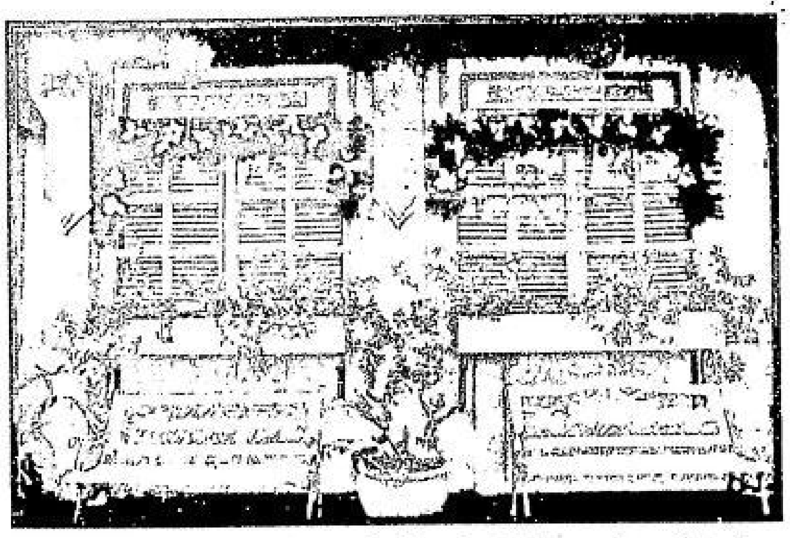

NATIVITY and Sto. Niño figures are gifts; Buddha and Hindu deity are souvenirs from China and India.

CHRISTMAS balls (left) are displayed at the pond decorated with stones from Pampanga.


CRYSTAL balls are from Shanghai, and silver balls are from a Makati store.

HE PLANS to rebuild these nipa huts damaged by Milenyo.


THE GARAGE was turned into an all-white lanai, where party guests can chat and smoke.


HE MIXED the yellow paint on the French windows and repainted the wrought-iron benches in lemon and turquoise.